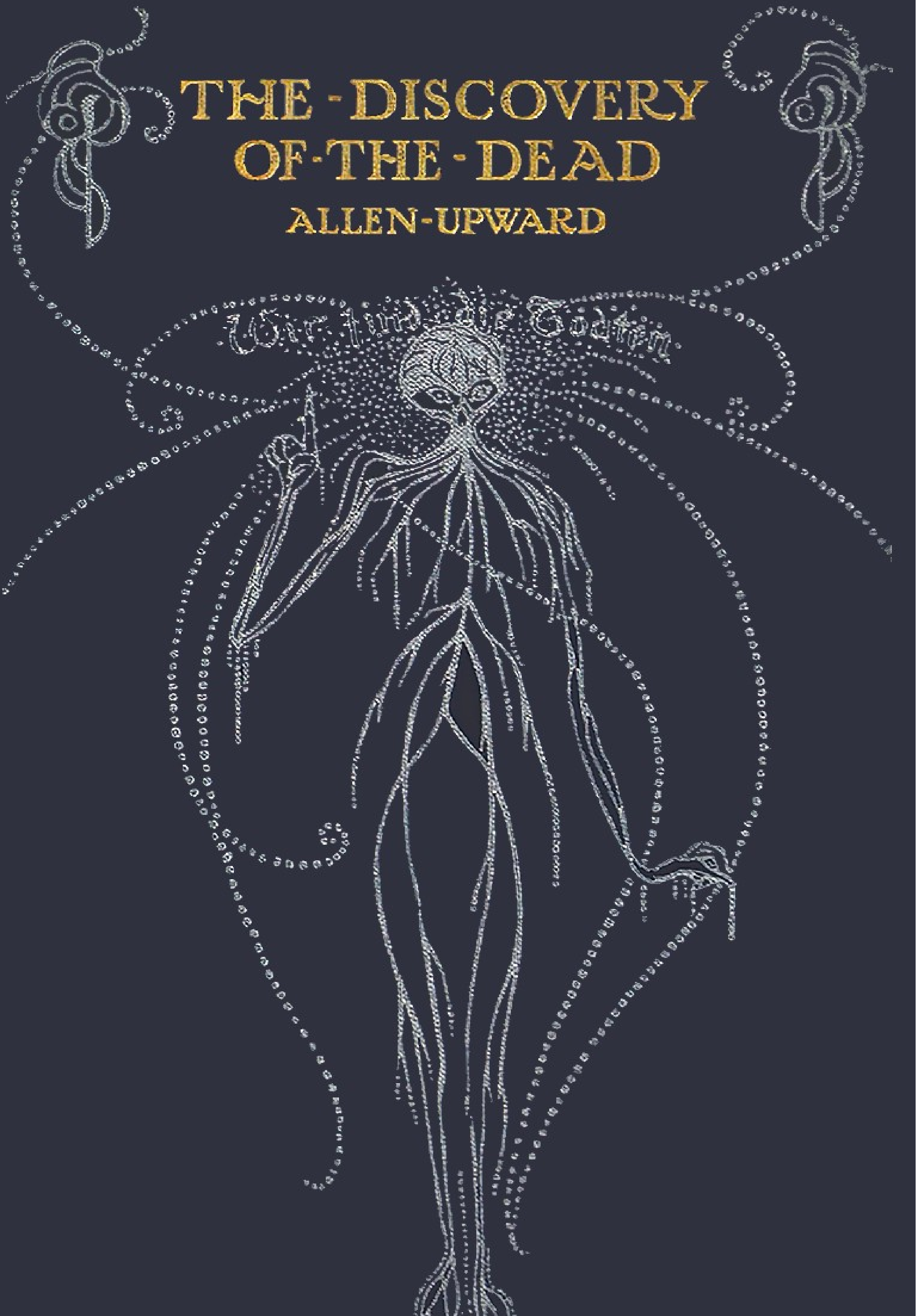
THE-DISCOVERY OF-THE-DEAD

ALLEN-UPWARD



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The Discovery of the Dead

by

Allen Upward

Published 1910

THE DISCOVERY OF THE DEAD

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The Discovery of the Dead

By

Allen Upward

London
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1910

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Advertisement

I SHOULD have been glad for many reasons to have cast this story in the form of a popular romance. But it seemed to me that to do so might be to throw doubt on the good faith of the suggestion which I desired to put before those who are sincerely interested in what some call spiritualism, and some call psychical research. For it is a suggestion—neither a dogma nor a hoax.

I have therefore told the story as it was told to me by my δαίμων.

A. U.

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Book I

The Discovery of the Dead

Chapter I

The Discoverer of Necrolite

THE cloud which still hangs over the name of Karl Lücke on account of the character of his later researches, and the sinister manner of his death, renders it advisable to offer a few words by way of respectful protest against the harsh estimate of his work which prevails in scientific circles.

The quarrels of the learned do not interest the outside public, as a rule, but the investigations of Lücke were on such unusual lines, and his discovery is of so much importance to the human race, that the matter ought not to be left entirely to specialists to dispose of according to their own prejudices.

There are times when the interests of humanity ought to override petty considerations of etiquette, and even if there were anything in the character of Lücke's later work opposed to scientific tradition—which I venture to deny— yet the results obtained are surely of such transcendent interest that the discoverer of *necrolite* is entitled to be judged by a wider tribunal than that of a small ring of physicists and physical chemists.

At the same time, it is well to insist that there is nothing in the methods of the late Professor Lücke, nor even in his results, however startling they may appear at first sight, which can be objected to fairly by the most straitlaced champion of positive science. His sole offence really consists in having applied recognised methods of research to a subject hitherto tabooed by the modern school of scientists.

The hollowness of the whole controversy which has arisen over these discoveries is shown by the fact that the German religious Press, while not pronouncing on their scientific soundness, has, generally speaking, shown a disposition to welcome Lücke's results as a legitimate addition to our knowledge, if not as a support to revelation; while it is the leaders of the materialist school associated with the names of Büchner and Haeckel, who have accused Lücke of irreverence, and denounced his researches as a new form of witchcraft.

It is to be feared that personal motives, not visible on the surface, have influenced some of the attacks on what is, on the face of it, a departure of the most far-reaching importance for the world. The discoverer of necrolite lived apart from the coteries which form public opinion; he was eccentric and unsocial in his ways, and the charge of scientific heterodoxy is one easily made, and not easily shaken off. 13 Modern science has her creeds, her dogmas, and her canons, no less than religion, and her specialists are apt to put forth claims not less arrogant and exclusive than those of the priests of other creeds, and to enforce them with equal confidence and cruelty.

Necrology, as Karl Lücke has styled the science founded by him, of course, is not a new study. What he has done has been to enlarge its possibilities by furnishing us with a new instrument of investigation.

The new substance discovered by him, although not so unique in its constitution as radium, is far more extraordinary in the purposes to which it can be put. Its application in the necroscope constructed by Lücke himself makes a new era in our knowledge of the unseen world— in the jargon of science, the subvisible universe —not unlike that which the telescope made in our knowledge of the starry heavens.

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The cry of impiety, therefore, must be disregarded in one case, as it has been in the other. In both instances a study formerly abandoned to charlatans and dabblers in mystery has been placed on a sound footing of exact observation and experiment. What modern astronomy is to the astrology of the Dark Ages, such the science inaugurated by Karl Lücke may become to the discredited necromancy of the ancients.

Occupying as the new science does a place midway between physics on the one hand and biology on the other, the labours of specialists in both branches will be required to outline the field of necrological research, to test the results already achieved by Lücke, and to co-ordinate his discoveries with the general body of scientific truth.

When that has been done, the statements which now sound in our ears like the tales of a wizard will pass into the common stock of human knowledge, and will be taught to our children in the schools.

It is as a first step towards that consummation that I have undertaken, before proceeding with Lücke’s own account of his sensational experiments and discoveries, to say what I know about this illustrious, but misunderstood, man, with whom it was my good fortune to have some personal association a short time before the end.

Above all, I hope to dispel by a plain and circumstantial account of what actually took place at Sastein the absurd and shocking rumours circulated by ignorant and credulous persons concerning a venerated name.

As the name of Karl Lücke will probably be quite unknown to most English readers, except a few specialists in chemistry and physics, I had better begin with a few biographical details, supplementing the meagre entry in the German Biographical Lexicon with some particulars which I gleaned from his own lips during my stay in the Castle of Sastein.

Karl Lücke was born in the university town of Dorpat, in the Baltic Provinces of the Russian Empire, on May 2, 1839. His father, Wilhelm August Lücke, was of German extraction, like so many of the inhabitants of Dorpat, which remained German in language and sentiment down to the closing years of the nineteenth century, when a determined crusade against the Germanism of this part of the Empire was undertaken by the Russian Government.

Frau Lücke, the mother of the scientist, bore the name of Campbell before her marriage, and is believed to have been of Scottish parentage.

Herr Lücke, the father, was a prosperous timber merchant, who rose to the position of Burgomaster of Dorpat, before the liberties of the town were interfered with by the Russian bureaucracy. He died about 1880 or 1881, leaving a considerable fortune to his son, who was thus able to pursue his later researches without being hampered by considerations of expense.

Karl, the only son of the marriage, was educated first in the high school of his native town, and then in the university, proceeding in the year 1866 to Leipzig, in Germany.

Here he settled for some years, studying the physical sciences, and devoting special attention to the obscure rays of the spectrum. His early experiments on the influence of light on organisms attracted the favourable notice of the illustrious Helmholtz, with whom he corresponded for many years, and whom he always referred to as his master.

About this time Lücke was a frequent contributor to the scientific Press, but none of these papers were deemed by him of sufficient importance to be reprinted.

In the year 1873 the Russian Government offered Lücke the chair of Physical Chemistry in the university of Dorpat, then in a flourishing condition.

This offer he gladly accepted; and he continued to hold the chair till 1895, when he resigned as a protest against the severe measures that were being taken to replace the German language by Russian in the university. As the reader may be aware, those measures have since resulted in reducing that once famous seat of learning to a state of obscurity.

Shortly afterwards Lücke, under the influence of the same German feeling, quitted his native place for good, and settled in Berlin. He was never married.

Some two years before his death the name of Professor Lücke leaped into a brief notoriety in consequence of a paper read by him before the Chemical Society of Berlin, on the "Higher Physics." In this celebrated paper he outlined the course to be pursued in his subsequent experiments, and even hinted at some of the possible results to be obtained.

As this paper formed the true starting-point for the discovery of necrolite, and as I happened to be present when it was read, I cannot do better than give my recollections of a rather memorable occasion.

I had been spending some time in Berlin, making some investigations of a character which I need not go into, as that has no bearing on the subject. Before leaving England I had obtained a commission from a newspaper to write a few special articles on life in the capital of Germany, and I had found it convenient to put forward this journalistic work as the object of my visit to Berlin.

No English newspaper enjoys a higher reputation on the Continent than the —— ——, and I found my connection with it a passport to many interesting functions. An invitation to attend a meeting of the famous Chemical Society to hear a paper was an attraction in itself, and I accepted it without knowing anything of the lecturer or his subject.

The title, “Higher Physics,” prepared me for a dull essay on ether or electricity, and I little anticipated that I should be assisting at the birth of a new science, full of the most tremendous possibilities for the world.

Nor did the appearance of the author inspire me with any expectation of novelty or sensation. Professor Lücke, as he stood up before his assembled brethren in scientific studies, answered to the idea of a typical Dryasdust.

Tall, thin, and angular, with a stoop in the shoulders, and heavily rimmed spectacles on his nose, he seemed as if he had just crept out from some book-lined study, and felt himself thoroughly out of place in the brilliant gathering which had come to listen to him.

Many of those present, among whom I recognised the faces of Virchow and Koch and other men of world-wide fame, wore the Order of Merit and other decorations, and nearly all were attired in evening dress.

The future discoverer of necrolite stood before them in a rusty frock-coat trimmed with tarnished braid, his hair and beard untrimmed, and his eyes peering round in a manner half absent, half nervous.

He drummed with his fingers on the little reading desk for a minute, fidgetted with the lamp, and at last drew a dingy roll of manuscript from his breast pocket, spread it open with a jerky motion, and proceeded to read in a low, muttering voice, which made it extremely difficult for a foreigner like myself to follow all that he said.

Finding that the opening of the Professor’s discourse dealt with his past work in connection with the obscure rays of the spectrum, a subject about which I really knew nothing, and in which I was not at all disposed to be interested, I withdrew my attention from him, and resigned myself to an hour’s boredom.

I had fallen into a half-somnolent condition, dreamily watching the faces round me, while the Professor rambled on, when I was suddenly aroused by seeing a look of indignant surprise, almost of consternation, pass across most of the faces within my view.

The great Virchow, in particular, made a movement as though to protest against what had just been said by the lecturer. I turned to look at Professor Lücke himself, and saw that he was going on in the same dull, commonplace tone, evidently quite unconscious of the impression he had just made.

Then the next sentence of the paper fell on my ear, and caused me to understand that I was listening to the first announcement of a scientific revolution.

Chapter II

A New Columbus

THE existence of the X rays, now accepted on all hands as a matter beyond dispute, has completely discredited the position so long held by students of natural science, that our knowledge of the universe and its contents must be limited to corporeal phenomena.

“Either we must change our conception of Matter, or the theory that the contents of the universe consist of Matter and Motion must be abandoned.”

As the calmly uttered words fell from the reader’s lips the profound sensation produced by them on all present seemed to make itself perceptible to him.

Professor Lücke took his eyes off the manuscript for a moment, glanced round the room with a shrinking, disconcerted air, and then went on reading at a slightly quicker rate.

“By corporeal phenomena I mean objects capable of being apprehended by the celebrated ‘ five senses.’

“While admitting the usefulness of these instruments of observation, and recognising that the senses of touch and sight more especially must always retain some importance as tests of certainty, I consider it proved that they can no longer be regarded as infallible or exclusive.

“The body, or material envelope, may be regarded as a net with meshes of a certain degree of fineness, which intercept numerous energies of the universe, such as solar light, heat, sound waves, and the resistance of bodies, while allowing other energies to pass through undetected.”

It was at this point in the Professor’s address that I first began to catch a glimpse of his meaning, and to be really interested. Not being myself a scientist, I did not understand the grounds on which Lücke’s ideas were regarded as heretical by the specialists present. To me his view seemed clear and intelligible, pointing the way to new and fascinating fields of research.

“By its exclusive reliance on the senses, science has confined its investigation of Nature to the narrow field of phenomena hitherto called material, but which I propose to call corporeal.

“Outside that class we may now postulate another, of which such rays as that observed by Rontgen may afford a revelation.”

I glanced at the serried row of faces, hardening into an expression of more than disbelief— of positive anger and disgust. Dr. Koch openly smiled, as he lay back in his chair, like a man who finds himself listening to a third-rate singer at a concert.

“In a former age such phenomena as I have postulated would have been described as supernatural. In accordance with modern scientific usage, which has discarded that term, I propose to substitute for it the term supersensuous.

“Supersensuous phenomena I define as true objects which do not stimulate the senses to any appreciable response, under ordinary conditions.

“Supersensuous phenomena not being corporeal, their investigation must be pursued by a bolder and more original method of research. In this direction we have opened to us a new department of science, which may be called the higher physics.”

At this point in the lecture I began to fear that Professor Lücke was verging towards spiritualism, occultism, or whatever be the popular name for a species of pseudo-science which has hitherto been pursued chiefly by charlatans foi’ the benefit of dupes.

My impression seemed to be shared by the gathering at large, for they had now openly withdrawn their attention from the lecturer, and were whispering among themselves. A moment later they were stirred to renewed attention by the use of language strictly technical and orthodox.

“It has now been demonstrated that the human eye, so much lauded by a former generation of scientists for its supposed delicacy of structure, is in reality an exceedingly coarse instrument, far inferior to a photographic plate or film.

“It is, therefore, no longer worthy of science to accept the eye as any criterion of the contents of the space which it surveys.”

These sentences produced a clear reaction in the reader’s favour. It was evidently a chemist, and not an “occultist,” who was addressing us.

The good impression was deepened by what followed.

“The plate which reveals to us the X rays does so by a simple physical process. It converts their energy of vibration into energy of chemical reaction. This latter form of energy our senses are able to recognise. Hence this conversion of energy may be compared to the translation of a foreign language into one which we already understand.

“It is evident that there must be a wide scope for other translations of a similar kind. We may, if we please, take up the task of devising new appliances which will intercept all manner of universal energies at present concealed from us, and record them in terms of our senses. “Such a departure may easily result in displaying to us what is at present an unknown and unseen world.”

It was as if a new Columbus had arisen to declare his belief in a new antipodes, and to point out the way to its discovery. And, like the Columbus of the fifteenth century, his prophetic reasonings fell on ears as deaf and obdurate as those of any Spanish Inquisitor.

“Of the character of the world thus awaiting scientific exploration we may gain some notion, perhaps, from the speculations, however crude and unsatisfactory, of the ancients. The reports which have come down to us of this Underworld —to use a name in common acceptance—may prove not wholly fabulous.”

By this time the daring and yet assured manner in which Lücke was expounding his views, at one moment using the dryest terms of science and at the next moment the language of folk-lore and superstition, had fairly carried his listeners out of their depths.

They listened to him like men who would have liked to object, but dared not. Dreading and disliking his conclusions, they seemed unable to detect a flaw in his premises or his argument.

“The evolution of the vulgar ‘senses,’ it appears probable, has been accomplished at the cost of the general sensitiveness of the organism. In becoming specialists, as it were, in the observation of a few limited classes of vibrations like sound and scent, and so on, we have lost the power to respond to others. The animal at a lower stage of development may be said to see the universe dimly, but to see it whole; we see more distinctly, but we see the universe only in sections.

"For this reason we shall not be wrong in paying attention to the traditions which reach us from a lower plane of culture, testifying to the existence of perceptions in our ancestors which we no longer enjoy, and of phenomena which it has been the fashion of the nineteenth century to treat as imaginary.

"It may even prove to be the case that the celebrated magic of the ancients, so long tabooed

by the Catholic Church as the science of Hell— that is to say, of the pagan Underworld—embraced the knowledge of scientific processes which we are about to rediscover; and that some of the phenomena which have ranked as the objects of vulgar superstition may hereafter be brought within the field of exact investigation."

The lecturer ended as abruptly as he had begun, folded up his manuscript and returned it to his pocket, and resumed his seat by the right of the chairman.

An unusual scene followed.

In accordance with the custom which obtains in most learned bodies of the kind, a speaker should now have risen to propose a resolution that the thanks of the Society be given to the reader, and that his paper be printed in the Transactions. A discussion should have followed, terminated by the unanimous passing of the resolution.

On this occasion the chairman glanced with a degree of nervous apprehension at the scientist appointed to move the resolution, who was no other than the great Professor ——, of Leipzig, perhaps the most distinguished physical chemist in Europe, and famous for his antagonistic treatment of the kinetic molecular theory of gases.

The Professor rose to his feet with great deliberation, glanced around him with a dry, ironical smile, and announced in sarcastic tones that he had come there expecting to hear a scientific paper, dealing with subjects of which he had some cognisance. While congratulating Professor Lücke on the unexpected originality of his paper, and the brilliance of the imagination displayed, he felt himself so thoroughly incompetent to discuss the views put forward that, instead of moving the usual formal vote, he thought he should better interpret the feeling of those present if he contented himself with moving that the Society do now adjourn.

The Professor sat down amid a murmur of relief and approval from his brethren, and it was borne in upon me that I had assisted at the death of a reputation.

Those few sentences, with the manner in which they were delivered, had killed Karl Lücke, as far as the opinion of the scientific world could go. Professor ——'s cutting resolution was seconded and carried without discussion, and the meeting broke up in some disorder.

Lücke himself attempted no explanation or rejoinder. Evidently surprised and distressed by the reception of his paper, but too proud to justify himself against the scorn of his brethren, I saw him sit with his head sunk on his breast while the vote was moved and carried, and then rise up, bow with some dignity to the chair, and walk out, no one venturing to accost him as he passed.

For my part, I felt that the episode would not end there. Professor Lücke's exposition had aroused in me the keenest interest and curiosity, and I believed entirely in his good faith and clearness of mental vision.

These learned chemists and physicists might regard their brother scientist as insane—it seemed to me that the charge might be brought more fairly against themselves. I realised for the first time the narrowing and stunting effect on the brain of one study, pursued exclusively, and I now look upon every specialist as mad.

There were no reporters present, the title of "Higher Physics" not having held out much promise of sensation. In the Berlin papers of the following day I saw only a curt paragraph of three lines, stating that Professor Karl Lücke, Ph.D., formerly of Dorpat, had read a paper to the Chemical Society on the "Higher Physics," of a speculative character.

It was evidently intended that the subject should be dismissed with silent contempt. Indignant at this boycotting policy, as I considered it, I sent a full account of the whole affair to England for publication. My editor returned the article with a characteristic note:

> Dear Mr. ——, I am afraid our readers are not interested in the speculations of German professors. When your friend has discovered something practical, like the X ray, I shall be glad for you to deal with it in our magazine page, but only if the article can be illustrated with photographs.
>
> In the meantime, as I gather that Professor Lücke's views are considered a bit erratic by his brother scientists, perhaps it is doing him a kindness not to advertise them.—Yours, etc.

I give this letter, irrelevant as it may appear, in order to show what great obstacles are interposed by the cut-and-dried routine of journalists to any new ideas penetrating to the public.

Here was an important step, inaugurating a new era in our knowledge of the universe, and all the editors in Fleet Street would refuse to let their readers know anything about it, unless it could be dished up with a few cheap photographs on a back page, along with an account of a performing kangaroo, and a recipe for a hair-wash.

Boycotted in the scientific Press because of his originality, excluded from the popular Press because his subject did not lend itself to the camera, Karl Lücke was silenced as utterly as though he had been committed to an oubliette in a mediæval dungeon for the crime of heresy.

It was this consideration which decided me to approach him. I saw that a man of his studious habits and shrinking temperament was wholly unfitted to maintain a long and weary fight with the world for a hearing for his ideas. And it seemed to me that it would be a worthy task to become, as it were, his missionary. I resolved to go to him and place my pen, my energy, and my knowledge of the Press at his service.

I called at his modest house in an outlying quarter of Berlin. The door was opened to me by a surly manservant.

“The Herr Professor is not at home. The Herr Professor has left Berlin. The Herr Professor has not permitted any information to be given of his whereabouts.”

Chapter III

The Wizard of Sastein

PROFESSOR LÜCKE, realising that the opinion of the scientific world was against him, and perfectly indifferent to any other opinion, had formed the honourable resolution of retiring from public notice until he was able to produce a practical demonstration of the soundness of his views.

Unlike his great prototype, who was obliged to sue to Queen Isabella for the sum required to fit out his immortal expedition, the necrological Columbus was equipped with ample means for his proposed exploration of the invisible Underworld.

At the time when I lost him he had gone on a tour through the Prussian provinces in search of a secluded retreat in which to pursue his experiments and researches without fear of being observed.

In taking this step he made a mistake natural in one so little versed in knowledge of mankind. The only place in which real seclusion is possible is the suburb of some great city, a suburb like Kennington or Hackney, neither new nor fashionable—a sort of obscure, neutral ground between respectability and poverty.

The country is a sounding-board, magnifying tenfold every scrap of gossip and scandal. There is less privacy on a moorland farm than in Piccadilly.

It is possible that, but for this oversight on his part, I might never have heard of the Professor again, and he might have perished without any hint of his wonderful achievements ever reaching the public ear.

It was in a New York paper, curiously enough, that I next heard of him. How they got the item I cannot tell—probably it was a cutting from one of the German papers which are published in the United States for immigrants from the Fatherland.

The paragraph appeared with the customary scare-heads, which read something like this:

TWENTIETH CENTURY WIZARD

German Villagers Scared by Strange Pranks of a Mad Professor

OWLS, LIZARDS, AND HUMAN EYES

The paragraph went on to describe the sensation produced in a Pomeranian village called Sastein by the proceedings of an eccentric retired professor, who had come to inhabit a half-ruined castle in the district, and was carrying on mysterious experiments with reptiles and birds and human remains. The villagers, it was stated, firmly believed that their neighbour's proceedings were unholy, and there were all kinds of rumours as to his supposed dealings with the Powers of Evil.

Although the name of this reputed sorcerer was nowhere mentioned in the newspaper, I instantly jumped to the conclusion that he could be no other than the author of the paper which had so much impressed me, the paper on the "Higher Physics."

It was difficult to tell how much of truth and of fiction there was in the sensational account; but, remembering the reference to magic in the concluding sentences of the Professor's paper, I feared that he might have succumbed to the temptation to try some of the experiments of the old-time necromancers, in the hope of finding some grain of truth among the rubbish. And it was easy to see how such practices would be judged of by an ignorant peasant population.

At the same time, it struck me that now, at all events, Professor Lücke had qualified for admission to "our magazine page." Indeed, I half expected to find myself forestalled when I approached the editor on my return to England.

But the ways of editors are past finding out, and over and over again it has been my experience that when I have wished to print something which I *knew* the public would read eagerly— which they *have* read eagerly later on—I have found it a matter of sheer impossibility to get insertion for it in any publication in London. It was so in the case of a certain political plot, a.iid it has been so till this moment in the case of Lücke’s extraordinary researches.

Baffled in Fleet Street, I felt so convinced in my own mind of the importance of what was happening in the lonely village of Sastein, that I took the bold course of going thither at my own expense, in the hope of learning something that would repay me for the journey.

Sastein is a remote village situated near the coast opposite the island of Riigen. I reached it late one evening, and put up at the only inn in the place, a rather miserable hole, the landlord of which seemed anything but pleased at” having a visitor. Without saying too much, I inquired if there were not some celebrated man living in the Castle of Sastein, and learned, as I expected, that it was no other than Professor Lücke.

The landlord, whose name was Beek, or Biek, spoke of the Professor as though he did not wish me to think that he himself shared the vulgar superstitions of the villagers. But I could see that he regarded the scientist with dislike, if not with dread.

“The Herr Professor lives in the castle all alone with a housekeeper and a valet. He never comes out in the day-time. At night he comes out, and goes into the forest. No one dares to follow him, but the woodcutters say there is a round clearing about a mile from the castle, and they have seen the marks of a fire there. That is where the peasants say he goes to talk to the devil.”

“Talk to the devil!”

“Yes, my Herr, that is what these stupid people say. Gottfried Klaus, the charcoal-burner, swears that he was passing that way one night, and heard him asking the devil all sorts of questions, and waiting for his replies. He could not see the devil, but he saw the Herr quite plainly. He was covered with steel armour, as if he were afraid that the breath of the devil would scorch him, and he wore a hideous mask with great goggle eyes.”

I did not believe very much of this story. The landlord, in answer to further questions, declared that strange animals, birds, lizards, and snakes chiefly, had arrived at the castle in waggons, some of them dead, and some alive. Herr Lücke had killed a great many of the latter, sacrificing them to the devil, according to the village belief.

But the most horrid of these sensational reports was the one about the eyes. The Professor's man-servant, -with whom most of the gossip seemed to have originated, asserted that his master had received mysterious parcels, which he had taken into his laboratory to open. But he, Adolf Harmann, had unfastened one, and, peeping into it before delivering it to the Professor, it had proved to contain eyes, freshly dissevered from the sockets. And some of these eyes were those of human beings.

I found it difficult to believe this gruesome tale, which was certainly enough to account for the evil thoughts of the villagers concerning their distinguished neighbour.

However, I let the landlord tell me everything he had to say, reserving judgment till I should have seen the Professor himself.

About noon the next day I presented myself at the great gate of the castle. It was open, and, seeing no one about, I went through, and up to the principal entrance, an iron-bound door sheltered by a stone porch.

Here I tugged at a huge iron bell-pull, and the resulting clamour quickly produced a man-servant— the same I had formerly seen in Berlin.

He did not recognise me, and showed a great deal of surprise at my appearance. His manner was quite friendly this time. I fancy his nerves had been shaken by what he had seen of his master's experiments, and that he was disposed to welcome company.

However, he informed me that Professor Lücke was still in bed.

"He never comes down before one, sir. He sits up all night, and sleeps in the day."

I offered to wait, and the man made no objection. He led me through a bare stone hall, that might have been a feudal banqueting room, into a fairly cosy dining-room, with a good fire burning. But, to my surprise, the windows were shuttered and curtained, and the room lit by electric light.

"Master can't bear daylight," Hermann explained volubly. "His eyes are not strong enough. That is why he does most of his work at night."

A great black cat, with the staring yellow eyes peculiar to the species, rose from the hearth and erected a bushy tail. I could scarcely refrain from a smile as I reflected how much the companionship of such an animal was calculated to confirm the prejudices of the village.

I was advancing to stroke it, when the valet uttered a caution.

"I shouldn't touch the cat, sir, if I was you."

"Why, does it scratch?"

"It scratched master terribly once."

In spite of myself I began to be affected by the singular tone in which Hermann spoke. It did not become me to question him about his master, but perhaps my look spoke for me, for the valet went on to explain:

"The Herr Professor bought the cat for one of his experiments. He sent for it all the way from Berlin. He has a room upstairs into which no one is allowed to go. He took the cat into this room one day, soon after it arrived, but what he did to it I cannot say."

As I listened a question arose within my mind which put my duty in a new light. I suspected —it was but a bare suspicion—that Professor Lücke might have ceased to be entirely responsible for his actions. There was a vein of madness in Columbus; perhaps there is such a vein in all great pioneers of humanity. In that case, what part ought I to play?

The Professor appeared to have no near kinsfolk, he had voluntarily broken with all his old friends and associates, and he was living with servants who were evidently not to be trusted, among neighbours quite incapable of interfering with discretion.

My own interference might seem officious, and possibly land me in difficulties, but it seemed to me that I ought not to let myself be influenced by such counsels of selfish timidity.

Assuming a tone of authority, I said to the servant—"Your master is not expecting me. I desire you to tell him simply that a gentleman wishes to see him on business. The Herr Professor's friends are anxious about him, in consequence of what they have heard, but you are not to tell him that. You understand?"

Adolf Hermann understood the gold coin with which I emphasised my caution, at all events. Dropping his voice almost to a whisper, he responded:

“I’m glad you’ve come, sir. To tell you the truth, I’ve been afraid of master lately. I believe he has got powers that aren’t natural.”

“What sort of powers do you mean?”

“He sees things that we can’t see. And he knows things that happen without seeing them. He can tell what’s going on in this very room, without being anywhere near.”

“Impossible.”

“It’s a fact, sir, I swear it. Why, he knows when dinner is ready, and comes down without being told. One day when Elsa—that’s the housekeeper—was in the room, and I gave her a kiss just for a bit of fun, he spoke to me about it afterwards.

“And that’s not the worst. One night I went out on to the tower leads, and master was there, and when he saw me he gave a scream as if I had been a ghost, and fell down in a fit. And it’s my belief that he had been using some wicked spell, and that he mistook me for the devil.”

“Why haven’t you offered this gentleman a chair? You have kept him standing for a quarter of an hour.”

I turned and saw Professor Lücke in the doorway.

Chapter IV

A Tragic Denouement

A GLANCE at Professor Lücke was enough to make me ashamed of my fears respecting him. His eyes were concealed by dark glasses, but he was in all other respects the man whom I had seen and admired in Berlin. His hands, I noticed, had been badly scorched.

His reception of me was entirely worthy of his high character. He explained to me that he had shut himself up in Sastein till such time as he could vindicate his reputation in the eyes of the scientific world, and that in the meantime he was indifferent to outside opinion.

He had now, he told me, achieved results which would compel the Chemical Society to

reverse its judgment of him, and was only waiting certain further developments before he laid those results before it.

When I ventured to hint at the rumours about his work current in the village he did not appear to be wholly taken by surprise. He puzzled me a little by saying, with a thoughtful air:

“Few popular superstitions are without some basis, which it is for science to detect and examine. These peasants think I am in communication with the devil. Well, why should science assume that among the forces which it has not yet investigated there are none possessing the character of personal volition?”

The Professor seemed more disturbed when I suggested to him that the popular prejudice might give other specialists, who were jealous of his eminence, an excuse for refusing him a hearing. By harping on this string I at last

induced him to make a concession which amply repaid me for my journey to Sastein.

He undertook to draw up for my benefit a brief account of his experiments and discoveries, in the form of a memoir, suitable for the ordinary reader, so that, in case his brother physical chemists refused him justice, public opinion might be brought to bear upon them.

By his own request, I stayed on at Sastein while the memoir was being written. Professor Lücke would give me no clue to its contents, but from several remarks that escaped him I gathered that the strictly scientific results he had achieved were altogether eclipsed in point of interest and importance by certain discoveries to which he had been, as it were, accidentally led.

During this time I did my best to disabuse Hermann and the villagers of the notions they entertained about a great and good man. But I admit that towards the end of the time I was rendered uneasy by a perceptible change in the Professor.

He appeared to me to shun any intercourse with the servants and myself, and to be weighed down by some anxiety or apprehension of a very serious kind. The valet, who got frightened by these symptoms, once more approached me, and confided to me his opinion that the change in his master was due, in some way which he could not explain, to those nocturnal walks in the forest which had excited the superstition of the Sasteiners.

At Hermann’s prayer, and only after much hesitation, I consented to take a step which I think subsequent events have fully justified. This was to follow the Professor one night, in company with Hermann, and watch over him.

We placed ourselves where we could see Professor Lücke emerge from a little door at the foot of the tower, by which he always went forth.

At about eleven o’clock the door opened, and a figure presented itself which certainly lent colour to some of the village reports.

Professor Lücke’s face was almost concealed from view by a species of vizor or mask, resembling those worn by motorists, the glasses over the eyes being large and projecting. He wore what appeared to be a suit of clumsily made armour, and carried in his hand a long, slender rod, which proved in the event to be of steel.

There had been thunder about all day, and as the Professor was going to walk under the trees, it was impossible not to feel apprehension for his safety.

Adolf Hermann, who was in a state of some nervousness, drew my attention to the rod which his master carried.

“Do you see his wand, sir? What does he want that for, if it isn’t to make the spirits come to him?”

I shook my head angrily. I was the more annoyed by the fellow’s language because I had begun to see afar off, as it were, what a singularly close resemblance there was, on the surface, between the methods which this modern scientist was adopting in the strictest spirit of orthodox materialism and the empirical and probably nonsensical devices of the bygone wizard.

How could the ignorant class, to which Hermann belonged, be expected to understand the difference—a difference which the learned themselves have only grasped since the days of Bacon?

The difference between modern science and that of the Middle Ages is much like that between fine flour and the ears of corn as they grow on the stalk. There is something valuable in both, but in one case it is mixed up with chaff and husks, in the other it is separated and cleared from rubbish.

I shall always be proud to remember that my own faith in the great man who had honoured me with his friendship remained unshaken by the apparent mystery and eccentricity of his proceedings.

If on this occasion I feared for him, it was because I knew how liable all brain-workers are to fits of dangerous depression. I did not for one moment permit myself to entertain the suspicion that Professor Lücke was really seeking knowledge by doubtful or discredited methods which he could not have defended to other scientists.

The Professor walked slowly away from the castle, and we followed him, keeping about fifty paces in the rear.

There was no need for us to observe much precaution. The scientist seemed absorbed in meditation, and never once turned his head.

Indeed, he hardly appeared to notice what was in front of him, as he plunged into the depths of the forest, striking his feet from time to time against the roots of the trees, and occasionally almost running up against a trunk before he turned to avoid it.

After nearly half an hour's walking, I discerned ahead the clearing in the wood which I had heard about from the landlord of the Sastein inn.

It was as nearly as possible circular in shape, but as far as the dim light enabled me to see there was no mark of any fire or other signs of preparation.

A tree-stump, about a foot high, stood near the edge of the circle, and on this Professor Lücke seated himself, thrusting his metal rod into the ground between his feet. It occurred to me, as I watched the action, that he intended it to serve the innocent purpose of a

lightning-conductor, in case the storm broke overhead.

I said as much to Hermann. 'But the valet only shook his head. He was evidently disposed to see something uncanny in his master's most harmless actions.

In order to observe better, we moved round to a position on the opposite side of the clearing, from which we faced Herr Lücke.

I now observed that he had taken off the mask, or eye-shield, he had worn on his way to the spot, and was replacing it by another, which he seemed to be fitting on with the greatest care.

If only some intuition had warned me of the true character of that common-looking screen, as it appeared to be, I might even then have rushed forward and snatched it away from the doomed man!

Immediately after putting it on, the Professor's

manner underwent a great change. He seemed to be staring about him like a man who was anticipating some danger, turning his head from side to side, and shifting his position on the tree-stump.

After a short time he began to speak aloud. There being no one within reach but ourselves, I imagined for a moment that he had caught sight of us among the trees. But it was quickly evident that such was not the case. He turned his face in a different direction, and seemed to be calling someone without much assurance of being answered.

We were too far off to hear what he said. The wretched manservant, who was now fairly shivering with fright, whispered in my ear:

“He’s calling on the devil! I daren’t stay any longer!”

“Nonsense!” I answered sharply, though I confess my own nerves began to be affected by the eerie scene and by the contagion of the other man’s fears.

“I’m afraid!” moaned the valet. “Can’t you see that the Herr Professor is afraid himself?”

“If your master thinks he is in any danger, it is all the more your duty to stand by him,” I responded. “You, a Christian man, ought to be ashamed of yourself for such idle fancies. If you really are afraid, make the sign of the cross.”

I gave this advice, I confess, hoping that Hermann would take a precaution I was ashamed to take myself, for by this time I was badly shaken*.

Hardly had the words left my lips when Professor Lücke leaped to his feet, with his hands held out before him, like a man in mortal terror. I saw Hermann cross himself with frantic energy, and in the same moment the impending storm seemed to break without the slightest warning, the steel conductor emitted a ripple of blue flame, and Herr Lücke, with a terrible cry, fell face downward on the earth.

The cry of the fallen man was echoed by a wild shriek from Adolf Hermann, who fell on his knees, uttering wild ejaculations. I retained sufficient self-control to seize him by the shoulders and give him a good shaking.

“Your master has been struck by lightning. Come and help me to pick him up.”

My severity braced the valet up for the moment. I took hold of his arm, and fairly dragged him to the spot where the unfortunate scientist lay prone. Together we turned him over, and the first glance told us that he was dead.

In falling, the complicated spectacles that I have described had become detached, and lay apart on the ground. While moving round the head of the corpse, to raise it, Hermann—I have always believed by accident—set his foot on the lenses and smashed them. I did not notice the accident at the time, being busy in trying to strip off the metal breastplate or jacket which the dead man had worn, in order to make certain whether his heart had ceased to beat.

The armour—if it could be so called—proved to be of tin, and very light. We wrenched it off without much trouble, and I proceeded to loosen the things round the victim's neck.

Adolf Hermann, who was still in a state of abject terror, only subdued by deference to my authority, now struck a match from a box which he had brought with him.

The light revealed the true cause of the Professor's death in a small blue mark on his throat—the well-known evidence of death by lightning.

Unfortunately the wretched manservant, half maddened already by what had happened, no sooner caught sight of this reassuring sign—as it

might almost be termed in the circumstances, than he completely lost his senses.

"Look! There!" he fairly screamed. "The devil has strangled him!"

And before I could speak he was in full flight from the spot, yelling and gasping as he went.

It was in this condition that he burst into the sleeping village—for he was far too much terrified to return to the castle—and aroused the inhabitants from their beds with the information that he had just seen his master strangled by the devil!

After what has been said about the state of opinion in Sastein, it is easy to understand the reception given to this absurd and wicked falsehood. The peasants to a man accepted it as the true explanation of what had occurred. The two or three better-class inhabitants, such as the Lutheran pastor and the schoolmaster, made

no serious effort to dispel the monstrous belief. In fact, the pastor, I suspect, was secretly inclined to favour it as a wholesome lesson to his flock on the dangers of materialist science. Such a report, of course, could not meet with any credence in a city like Berlin, and least of all among men like the members of the Chemical Society; but the fact that it was in circulation played into the hands of those who were already disposed to treat Lücke as a charlatan.

While admitting that his death was due to natural causes, they professed to think that the wild and discreditable superstition of the villagers, and of Lücke's servants, must have been due to his own conduct. They suggested, in short, that Lücke had abandoned the legitimate methods of investigation recognised by them, in order to dabble in the formulas and recipes of mediæval sorcerers.

They did not believe or pretend that he had

actually held intercourse with spirits, good or evil, but they declared that he had sought such intercourse, and sought it through channels which deprived him of any right to consideration at their hands.

Finding that I could do nothing without assistance, I followed Hermann into the village, where I found half the inhabitants aroused and in a state of the most intense excitement.

One and all refused to follow me to the scene of the tragedy before the return of daylight. I therefore borrowed a lantern, and returned alone to watch over the body of my revered friend.

It was an hour after daybreak when the police arrived on the scene with a stretcher to convey the body to the castle.

There was no doctor in Sastein, but one had been summoned from a neighbouring town, and he accompanied the police. Needless to say,

after one glance at the body he pronounced it a case of death by electricity. An inquiry was held in the castle hall, and after hearing the evidence of the doctor, myself, and Adolf Hermann, the Court returned a verdict of "Death by misadventure."

The presiding magistrate, a man of formal and narrow mind, evidently suspected that the deceased had deliberately courted death by carrying the steel rod which apparently attracted the electric discharge. Something was made of the fact that neither Hermann nor I could swear that we had heard the thunderclap, and that no one else in the neighbourhood had noticed the storm break. The obvious explanation of all this was that everyone else was asleep at the time, and that we who had witnessed the tragedy had been too much excited to remark anything except the Professor's fate.

There being no legal representative of the Lücke family on the spot, I found myself left, as it were, in possession of everything for the time being. I had to make the necessary arrangements for the funeral, and to search the papers of the deceased for his will or the address of his man of business.

It was in the course of this search that I first penetrated to the room in which Professor Lücke had so long carried on his mysterious researches. It was fitted up in many respects like a chemical laboratory, with numerous electrical appliances, and, in addition, a rather gruesome dissecting table.

At the end of the room a space equal in size to a large closet was partitioned off. This compartment was perfectly dark, and proved to contain a single large electrical machine, at whose character and use I could make no guess.

But the thing that caught my attention, and caused me to snatch it up with an exclamation of triumph, was a small pile of manuscript, a few pages of which were charred by fire.

It was the Memoir—the precious record that I had prevailed on my dead friend to write!

At last I held in my hands the means of vindicating his memory; I held the immortal narrative of the discovery of the Underworld!

It was headed: NECROLITE.

Book II

Chapter I

The Memoir

“Popular Relation of some Experiments in Radiation, Resulting in the Detection of a New Organic Substance Possessed of Fluorescent Properties under the Influence of Sub-Electric Rays:

“To which is added a Description of some Phenomena Observed for the First Time by the Use of the Necrolitic Lens.”

I HAVE given the heading of the Professor’s Memoir exactly as it stands in order that the character of this momentous document may be understood.

It will be seen at once that Lücke overrated his qualifications for the task of writing in a manner suited to the ‘general reader. In spite of his desire to be simple and popular, his narrative abounds in technical terms, such as cannot be readily understood except by those who have made a beginning in the study of physical chemistry.

That being so, I have taken some liberties with the original, for which I hope to be pardoned in consideration of the object in view.

What follows is *not* intended to appeal to scientific students. If the present publication should arouse any interest in Lücke’s work, I shall be happy to place his manuscript as it stands at the disposal of some scientific publisher. In the meantime, I am submitting a version, which I have slightly modified in the interests of those to whom Lücke’s results will be more important than the exact steps by which he attained them.

At the same time, I desire to declare that I have taken no *needless* liberties with the original, and that for a reason to which I attach great importance.

It seems to me that the style in which this account is written affords the strongest possible guarantee of its good faith. Until Lücke’s discoveries have been tested and confirmed by other authorities, our belief in them must rest chiefly on this Memoir. It is a case of internal evidence. This document reveals nothing of the impostor or the crank. From first to last it reads like the dispassionate, careful statement of a conscientious worker, not attempting to grapple with the deeper problems raised by his investigations. Perhaps he intended to reserve that task to a later period, when his general results had been acknowledged by that tribunal of scientific opinion which had treated him so harshly, but which he was so pathetically anxious to conciliate. It is more likely that he would have preferred to leave the task of explanation to those great theorists for whom he had so much respect, and to whose labours he was accustomed to think that the work of mere observers and experimenters, like himself, was quite subordinate.

What follows must be read as Professor Lücke’s narrative, very slightly edited in places by myself.

PRELIMINARY.—The reasons which led me to undertake the search for the substance which I provisionally call necrolite are set forth in a paper entitled, “The Higher Physics,” read by me before the Chemical Society of Berlin, but not printed in the “Transactions.”

The argument of that paper may be re-stated thus:

The human eye is admittedly defective in two directions. It is defective physically, inasmuch as its range is limited to objects of a certain size and nearness. It is defective chemically, inasmuch as it is only sensitive to those rays of the spectrum which together make up white light.

It is insensitive, for instance, to the celebrated X rays.

The physical defects of the eye have been partly remedied by science, which has invented the telescope and microscope.

The object which science should next set before itself is to remedy the other class of defects by inventing a lens which will enable the eye to respond to other rays—in short, to see objects which are at present invisible. Such a lens might be termed a radioscope.

As the rays which make up white light, and can be detected by the eye, are coloured, I propose to call all other rays ultra-chromatic, or blank rays.

The difference between rays is a difference of wave-length or, what comes to the same thing, speed of vibration. Some of the blank rays are too short and quick for us to perceive, others too long and slow.

It is as though we were able to watch the progress of the minute-hand round the dial of a watch, but not that of the hour-hand or the second-hand.

From this partial blindness it results that we are only very partially aware of the contents of Space.

The X rays, it is now well known, pass through some substances, such as wood and flesh, while they are arrested by bones and metal. If we depended on the eye, we should not know that the human body contained a bony skeleton.

The phenomena concealed from us by the defective chemical power of the eye constitute for us an Unseen Universe.

A radioscope will enable us to explore this unseen world, in the same way that the telescope has enabled us to explore the starry depths.

I anticipated that some very curious and surprising discoveries were likely to follow from this investigation. It is to that prophecy that I attribute the unfavourable reception given to my paper.

In consequence of that reception, I decided to sever my connection with scientific circles until I had obtained results which would speak for themselves, and place my good faith as a scientist beyond dispute.

Whatever may have been supposed, I desire to record that I cherished no resentment on account of the sceptical attitude of other physical chemists towards my ideas. I recognise the right and duty of all who hold responsible positions in the scientific world to discourage speculation that seems to them unwarranted by the present state of our knowledge.

I have a right to expect that such an attitude will not be persisted in, in the face of the definite results which I am now in a position to submit to the judgment of the general public, as well as of specialists.

In the present Memoir I propose to outline the course of my experiments; to describe the composition and properties of necrolite, and to record some of the new and interesting facts disclosed by its use, concerning the unseen world, and the persistence of nervous energy after the necrosis, or death, of the human organism.

As I am led to believe that some of my observations, and more particularly those relating to the phenomena which I have provisionally named *necromorphs* (death shapes), are likely to be of great interest to others than specialists, I have consented to write the present Memoir in a style suited for popular perusal.

Although some of my fellow-workers may be disposed to blame me for this concession, I trust to be pardoned in view of the exceptional character of my discovery.

FIRST EXPERIMENT.—In order to pursue my work without interruption, I took a lease of my present residence, a castellated building of the sixteenth century in the village of Sastein, Pomerania.

The building was admirably adapted for securing freedom from noise. In order to escape from the bustle of servants, and their impertinent observation, I fitted up a large room on the upper floor of the east wing as my laboratory, the room below being used by me for meals. The servants' quarters were in the opposite wing.

One end of the laboratory I caused to be screened off by a wooden partition, converting it into a dark room, like those used by photographers.

The instruments used by me call for no particular description. The most important of them was a Crookes' tube, specially constructed for me by the —— Fabrik of Vienna, and supplied with very powerful batteries. I had this appliance installed in the dark room already described.

It is necessary, perhaps, to explain that it is this instrument which generates the X rays. Two opposite magnetic poles are enclosed in a tube, a vacuum is created, and a powerful electric current induced between the poles. This current gives off the rays detected by Rontgen, much as the passage of a steamer creates side ripples on the surface of water.

These ripples are too rapid to be seen by the eye, but they produce on a solution of barium platino-cyanide an effect like that produced by the common light-rays on a photographer's plate.

The problem before me was very simple. It was to find a substance capable of modifying the wave-length of rays.

The coloured rays which we see dissected and spread out before us in the popular rainbow form, as it were, a single octave in the scale of ethereal vibrations.

In themselves they vary from red, the slowest, up to violet, which is, so to speak, the top note. But beyond them, as I have explained, there arc upper and lower notes in the scale. The rays immediately above the violet are known to science as the ultra-violet rays.

It is clear that a substance which, without wholly intercepting these rays, diminished their speed of vibration, would render them visible, just as a drag which checks the speed of a wheel enables us to count the spokes.

Now, such a substance is already known to science. If ultra-violet rays are allowed to fall on a colourless solution of quinine sulphate, they emerge from it in the form of blue light.

In other words, *invisible rays are converted into visible ones*.

In view of this fact, long known to physicists, there was no inherent difficulty in the task before me. I had simply to seek for substances which would work the same change, for other classes of rays, beyond the ultra-violet. It was only a question of degree.

Such a substance is said, in scientific language, to be fluorescent. According to the great Helmholtz, with whom I formerly exchanged views on certain questions of organic chemistry and physics, the human eye itself is slightly fluorescent. I had, therefore, to increase its natural powers.

My first experiment was made with the X rays, on account of the knowledge we already possess concerning their action.

My object being to construct a fluorescent lens, I prepared a solution of barium platino-cyanide, according to the formula given in the Appendix, and enclosed it between two thin watch-glasses.

I then generated a powerful current in the Crookes’ tube, and applied this lens to my eye.

Chapter II

The Unseen World

THE first result was distinctly disappointing. All I could discern was an extremely faint greenish radiance like that of phosphorus in the immediate neighbourhood of the electric discharge.

The radiance did not appear to possess any illuminating power; in other words, it revealed nothing but itself.

It was now demonstrated that the barium platino-cyanide by itself was not sufficiently fluorescent for the object I had in view, and it therefore became necessary for me to search for some more active medium.

SECOND EXPERIMENT.—*The Platino-Chlorophyll Lens*.

With this view I entered on a long course of experiments with the fluorescent substances already known to science. Without going into details, I may say that my attention was at last concentrated on chlorophyll, the colouring matter of plants.

Chlorophyll is very highly fluorescent. It is well known that a solution of it is capable of converting white light into red.

After many failures I succeeded in combining the bi-sulphide of chlorophyll with barium platino-cyanide in the proportions given in the Appendix. In order to obtain chemical combination, it was necessary to pass a moderate electric current through a mixture of the two solutions, which united with a sharp report.

The resulting liquid, which assumed a very delicate pearl tint, I have provisionally named platinophyll.

Having prepared a lens in the manner already described, charged with this compound, I tested it in the dark room with the Crookes' tube.

On this occasion the result was highly satisfactory. I was at once able to perceive an intense luminosity of a blue character, which filled the room and extended through the walls and flooring in every direction, penetrating the woodwork as ordinary light penetrates glass.

The external light being unable to reach me, I was able to see only those objects which arrested the X rays.

It was at first somewhat startling to receive the impression that I was standing on nothing. The rays streamed past my feet into the apartment below, which happened to be my dining-room, and revealed the various metallic objects which it contained, such as the grate, bell-handle, gilt picture frames, and door knobs. I appeared to myself to be hovering in air over a dim chamber, lit by the rather ghastly blue light, and obscurely outlined by the objects just mentioned, which also appeared to be suspended in space.

While I was observing the unusual scene the brass knob and lock of the door slowly travelled through the air, describing an arc of two metres, and an upright human skeleton floated into the space below, with a walking motion.

I could see the skeleton advance to the fireplace, lift the lid of the iron coal-box, and go through the action of putting something, no doubt a billet of wood, on the grate, in which I inferred that a fire must be burning. The skeleton was evidently that of my manservant, the metal buttons on his waistband being distinctly visible.

The incident naturally caused me to turn a look on myself. I saw my bones clearly outlined, and also my watch, my metal studs and buttons, and a bunch of keys in the pocket of my trousers. These last presented a very curious appearance, as they seemed to be floating in the air in an inverted position.

I was conscious of a slightly uncomfortable sensation, such as a medical student is said to experience on witnessing his first dissection.

On returning to the laboratory, I found that the skin of my body was slightly scorched by the action of the rays. My eyes were also smarting severely.

In order to obviate the first of these discomforts, I designed a rough tin plating in the form of a tunic and drawers for future use, with satisfactory results. The eyes I found it impossible to protect without obscuring the power of vision.

As a consequence, I have gradually lost the ability to bear ordinary light, and I fear that if my present labours are prolonged they may end in partial or total blindness.

The success of the foregoing experiment assured me that I was on the right track, and that as I advanced my observations were likely to prove of considerable scientific interest.

THIRD EXPERIMENT.—*The Black Cat*.

My next step was to devise a substitute for the clumsy contrivance of a dark room as a means of intercepting daylight from the eyes.

I procured a leather cup, like those used by watchmakers, and fitted it with my fluorescent lens. When this was adjusted to the orbit of the eye no light could penetrate to the retina, except through the lens itself. I next gave the lens a coating of charcoal. This excluded the daylight, while not affecting the light afforded by the

cathode rays. Later on I provided a similar lens for the other eye, and managed to fashion a rough pair of spectacles. When I put these on I became, as far as the sense of sight was concerned, truly the denizen of another universe.

In a short time I found my platinophyll spectacles of some practical use. My servants being sometimes behindhand in serving meals, if I wished to know whether dinner was on the table, I had merely to turn on the current in the Crookes' tube, and put on these spectacles, when the presence or absence of the metal dish-covers below gave me the required information.

On one occasion, when looking down in this way, I was surprised by the sight of two skeletons gnashing their teeth at each other, and apparently trying to bite. A moment's consideration told me that they were in fact kissing.

Unfortunately, I afterwards reproved my valet for this levity, and as he could not tell how

I had become aware of it, he has since shown some distrust of me.

My success with the X rays decided me to pursue the investigation of other classes of sub-electric radiation.

The X rays being generated by an electric discharge under certain conditions, it was probable that other rays of greater or less wavelength would be generated by electric currents under different conditions.

I may point out here that the ultra-chromatic rays hitherto studied by science have been artificially produced. At the time I commenced these researches science had no convincing evidence that there were any bodies in nature which gave off such rays.

My first experiment in this direction was made with a black cat.

It is familiar knowledge that this common animal is highly charged with electricity. On being stroked it gives off sparks like those obtained from an induction coil, though these sparks, on account of their feeble luminosity, are visible only in the absence of daylight.

I procured a specimen without difficulty from a dealer in animals. Its hair was completely black, with the exception of the whiskers and eyebrows. The eyes were a bright yellow, and became brilliantly refractory under the feeling of anger. I first tested the cat's electrical properties by friction in the dark room, when the sparks were easily perceptible by the naked eye.

I next put on my platinophyll spectacles. At once the animal became faintly luminous all over, radiating a soft purple light in all directions. The light, though distinctly outlining the cat's shape, possessed but little penetrating power, and did not serve to illuminate other objects.

I have provisionally called this electrically-induced luminosity in an organism its aura.

On my increasing the friction, rather against the will of the animal, the aura became more brilliant, and the colour passed from purple to a dull crimson.

At this point the cat appeared to suffer discomfort, and its resistance became so strenuous that I was obliged to release it.

I thus left unsolved for the present the interesting question whether by further friction the aura could have been made to assume an orange, yellow, or other colour.

FOURTH EXPERIMENT.—*The Luminous Globe*.

The importance of the last experiment lay in demonstrating that every body in nature possessing electricity is self-luminous. It followed that the earth currents themselves must generate rays which would become visible through a lens of the right degree of fluorescence.

My next task was to replace the platinophyll compound described above by one of superior power in this respect.

My previous researches had shown me the right direction in which to look. The superiority of chlorophyll over other substances I attributed to the fact that it was an organic product.

I now abandoned the view taken by the science of the nineteenth century that the elements are invariable, and that the elements of life are contained in matter. I recurred to the older theory that the universe contains finer constituents than the material atoms, and that it is to the presence of such constituents, not yet brought under observation by science, that we must ascribe the phenomena of organic life.

Directing my attention to organic substances possessed of fluorescent properties, I naturally thought of the observation made by Helmholtz with regard to the eye. I now ordered a gross of eyes, human and animal, from a dealer in subjects for dissection.

After many trials, I succeeded in isolating a substance, which I provisionally call Incite, from the crystalline lens of the eye. It is not a pure substance, but appears to be a compound of carbon with an obscure and volatile clement, which I have not yet identified fully, and which I, meanwhile, call *lucium*.

Lucite is more fully present in the eyes of birds than in those of mammals. It is especially present in the eyes of owls and other night-flying birds. Even in them it is only present in very minute quantities; so much so, that it required over one thousand eyes to supply the material for a single platino-lucite lens.

Lucite being a hard substance, I was able to manufacture it into a solid lens, thus dispensing with the use of glass. In the form in which I finally achieved success with this substance it was combined with barium platino-cyanide in the proportions stated in the Appendix.

The first use to which I put this lens was to check my hypothesis with regard to the earth currents.

I waited till it was late at night, and then ascended to the summit of a tower at the north-east angle of the building. There was no moon, but a number of stars were faintly visible.

I had fitted the platino-lucite lens with a leather cup in the manner already described, obscuring the eye for which I had no lens by means of a simple bandage. As soon as I reached the top of the tower, therefore, I had only to fix the lens in the socket of my right eye.

Immediately I found myself standing on a luminous planet.

The dark face of the earth was changed to the appearance of a mighty furnace, in which red, yellow, and green flames battled for the

mastery. The comparatively feeble radiance of the surface soil and the upper strata was overpowered by the glowing mass of minerals and igneous rocks below. Great volcanic rivers of flame rushed beneath my feet, and I almost seemed to hear the roaring of the forges of the central fire.

Lifting my eyes from this bewildering spectacle, I no longer recognised the aspect of the heavens.

The familiar constellations had disappeared, and in their place I was aware of a confusing world of many-coloured globes, each several times larger than the moon, sweeping through space in orbits impossible to calculate, and every now and then seeming to roar and burst like giant bubbles of flame. One of these vast many-coloured moons appeared to be describing a curve through the heaven that would bring it into collision with the planet on which I stood, and

as it rushed towards me, swooping down, as it were, with the velocity of a cannon ball, I experienced all the sensations of a man in deadly peril.

The effect of all these new and overwhelming impressions on the brain was such that the cerebral centres actually weakened under the shock, and I became hysterical.

Unable to remind myself that I had merely to remove the platino-lucite lens in order to banish the phenomena, I stumbled wildly towards the head of the tower steps, intending to plunge down them. But on perceiving that the stone steps themselves had become fiery, I recoiled, crying aloud in despair.

My brain by this time was completely dazed, and its natural working was suspended. I seemed to myself to be the denizen of a burning world, encompassed by flames on every hand, and so strong was the illusion, that I suffered all

the sensations of extreme heat, becoming bathed in perspiration.

Finally, on advancing once more towards the steps, I beheld a form of fire, like a veritable fiend, emerging from the glowing gulf, and fainted from sheer terror.

My servant, who could not understand the cause of my excited condition, fortunately removed the radioscopic lens in the course of his attentions, so that when I regained consciousness I found myself lying on the tower roof under the ordinary light of the stars.

So severe was the shock caused to me by this experience, that I was obliged to lay aside the platino-lucite lens, and turn my researches in a new direction.

It was now that I stumbled almost accidentally upon a discovery, which appears likely to constitute a new departure in science.

Chapter III

The Discovery of the Dead

NECROLITE.—Stokes, the great English authority on light, has drawn attention in his Burnett lectures to the existence in the inner limbs of the cones of the retina, in birds and reptiles, of certain brightly-coloured sacs or globules, supposed by him to be connected with the colour-sense in these classes.

In the course of my experiments I had dissected away a large number of these globules, but it had not occurred to me to ascertain their chemical composition.

Now, finding that nothing was really known about these sacs, and that their supposed connection with the colour-sense was quite hypothetical, I decided, before throwing them away, to subject them to analysis.

Investigation disclosed that they contained a thick viscous liquor, combining carbonic oxide, fluorine, and other known elements, together with a substance which obstinately resisted analysis, but was capable of being reduced to a dry, friable powder.

This substance is one of the bases of *Necrolite*.

I tested its sensitiveness to the classes of rays already dealt with, but the results were indefinite.

Interested by the problem presented by this mysterious substance, I decided to push the inquiry a step farther.

In order to do this, I sent for a consignment of typical reptiles, toads, lizards, and serpents, in the living state.

My motive for this course was a suspicion, which proved to be correct, that the essential element of which I had found the base is highly volatile, so that it ceases to be present after the animal has been dead for some time.

I removed a number of sacs from specimens of the reptiles named, under the influence of anæsthetics.

Analysis at once revealed the presence of an extremely energetic and volatile agent of gaseous structure, which combined with the base already described to form the substance which I have named Necrolite, in allusion to its extraordinary properties.

Necrolite is a viscous, spongy substance, which in the necrolitic sac of the living reptile is of the consistency of tar. On being removed from the sac, and exposed to the free atmosphere, this substance rapidly parts with the element which bestows on it its exceptional character, and leaves as a residuum a friable earth of no value to science.

After a great number of trials I found it possible to arrest the process of evaporation by enclosing the Necrolitic in a carbonic oxide gelatine film. In this way I at length secured a lens of an efficiency comparable with that of the sac in the eye of the living reptile.

The necrolitic lens, or necroscope, proved negative to daylight, thus conclusively rebutting the notion entertained by Stokes of the uses of the reptilian sac.

Tried with the X rays in the dark room, it proved equally unresponsive. It was evident to me that there must be rays in nature which the necrolitic sac was designed to intercept, but they were clearly not allied to those with which I had been experimenting hitherto.

In some disappointment I turned off the current in the Crookes' tube, preparatory to going back into the laboratory. As my hand turned the switch I suddenly became aware that I was not alone.

THE NECROMORPHS.—As the phenomena observed by me have not been described before by any trained observer, I need offer no apology for recording my first impressions in some detail.

On first turning off the cathode rays I was aware of a mild, diffused luminosity, apparently due to an entirely new class of waves which the cathode rays had apparently interrupted or cancelled.

My immediate impression was that I was enclosed on all sides by masses of very delicate netting, tangled in some places, the threads or fibres of which glowed with a pale violet light, while the loose ends waved tremulously, as though under the influence of a faint breeze.

On a second glance the masses of network resolved themselves into an aggregation of what presented the appearance of inverted plants, the roots being closely compacted, while the stem and fibres tapered away into minute ciliations, as in the case of some varieties of seaweed. It was not till these singular forms began distinctly gesticulating to me by means of their antennae, or limbs, that I began to suspect that they were, in fact, zoological rather than vegetable.

I now perceived that they closely followed the outline of the nervous system of the human body, crowned by the mass of the brain. If the brain and nerves of a human being could be dissected out entire, and made to emit violet light, the resulting appearance would exactly correspond with that presented by the phenomena by which I found myself surrounded.

Biologists will readily appreciate the extreme beauty of the spectacle produced by the exquisite tracery of the nervous system seen under such conditions. As these luminous shapes floated round me, I was reminded of a group of purple anemones, with their delicate tentacles waving to and fro in a translucent pool of sea water.

It was by this time apparent that the zoomorphs, as I was inclined to call them at the outset, before apprehending their true character, were aware that they had attracted my regard, and that they desired to enter into some kind of communication with me.

The foremost of the web-like creatures, raising its right arm, or rather the fibres corresponding to that limb, beckoned to me to draw my attention, and then went through the motions of tracing in the air a series of great letters in the German character, spelling this sentence:—

“WE ARE THE DEAD.”

The intimation, which I could not disregard, that the phenomena I had detected were necrological stimulated my curiosity and interest in a very high degree.

I could not but realise that if this result were confirmed, it followed that my experiments in ultra-chromatic radiation had not only brought a new world within reach of the physicist, but had incidentally solved the great problem of persistence of consciousness after death, a problem which has long been regarded as one of the most difficult of solution in the whole range of physiology.

Inasmuch as I am not myself a professed physiologist, I recognised the necessity of proceeding with the utmost caution. Specialists are at all times inclined to view with jealousy intrusions into their own domain by workers in other branches, and it was, therefore, doubly necessary for me to report nothing which I had not thoroughly verified.

As the forms before me appeared to understand the use of language, I put a question to the Necromorph which had, so to speak, addressed me:

"Can you hear what I say?"

The Necromorph spelled out the answer as before.

"We do not hear you, but we read the action of your vocal nerves."

This was a valuable hint. I looked round, and perceived that several of the shapes were moving what corresponded to the labial and lingual nerves, from which I inferred that they were talking to each other. By watching them carefully during the weeks that followed I was gradually able to dispense with the clumsy pantomime I have described, and I am now able to converse with necromorphs as freely as with biomorphs.

I continued my examination of the Necromorph: "What is your name?"

"I am your father."

The answer caused me the most profound emotion. My father has been dead for nineteen years, and his body is buried in Dorpat, a distance of three hundred miles from Sastein.

On recovering my self-possession I felt that I must test the statement of the Necromorph. I asked it: "How is it that you are here?"

I no longer pretend to record the exact words addressed to me, but only my recollection of their sense.

"The world of the dead has been profoundly stirred by the news that you were likely to come into communication with us. Count von Sastein, the owner of this castle, has watched your experiments. Your friend Helmholtz was informed of what you were doing, and he predicted that you would achieve this result. He is present now. Newton and Leibnitz are also here."

Two Necromorphs, about whose luminous forms a mystic glory seemed to hover, separated themselves from the throng, and appeared to be saluting me.

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But before yielding to the sentiment of reverence inspired by these illustrious names, I felt that I must satisfy myself beyond doubt of the true character of the phenomena.

I said to the Necromorph which called itself my father:

"What was it you put into my hand in the railway carriage at Dorpat station on the day when I left home for the first time?"

The Necromorph wavered and trembled for a moment as though rendered unhappy by my doubt. Then it replied:

"I placed nothing in your hand. But I saw that your mother gave you a copy of the New Testament."

This answer dispelled my last uncertainty. Tears sprang to my eyes as the Necromorph spoke to me of my beloved mother, lost to me in early life.

"Where is she?" I breathed.

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Another Necromorph glided out of the throng and quivered before me. It raised its thread-like arms as though in blessing. Then the violet radiance of its outline dimmed and faded out, and by the agitation among the other Necromorphs I judged that the loving shape had suffered as it were a swoon.

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Chapter IV

The Gates of Sheol

NOW that I was fully convinced of the real character of the singular forms I have described, I became extremely anxious to study them further.

My interest in the subject was personal as well as scientific, and it is possible that some of the things which I am about to record may appear out of place in a scientific paper. I have been guided, however, by the advice of a friend, Mr. ——, who has convinced me that my observations in the Underworld will possess interest for others than scientists.

I had barely recovered from the emotion caused me by the appearance of my mother's Necromorph, when I was astonished to see another of these wonderful shapes advancing, so much smaller than its fellows that, even before it addressed me, I had guessed it to be that of a child.

"Who were you?" I asked, with expectation.

"I am Gottlieb Wertheimer," wrote the small Necromorph earnestly. I say earnestly, for already I was beginning to distinguish some shades of expression in the bearing and manner of these figures.

I recollected this name, which was that of a young schoolfellow whom I had protected on one occasion from the cruelty of an older boy. For some years we had been close companions, but Wertheimer had died at the age of fourteen, and I had long ceased to remember him.

His name conjured up powerfully the associations of my youth in Dorpat, and I inquired eagerly of the childish Necromorph after the beautiful Lotta ——, whom I had deeply loved. She had preferred to give herself to another, with whom she had gone to live in Riga, and I had not heard of her for at least forty years.

The Necromorph of young Wertheimer drew backwards, with an impulsive motion, as though it were offended with me, and was quickly lost in the throng of shapes.

One of the other Necromorphs, which had not hitherto addressed me, rebuked me for my lack of consideration.

"You have deeply wounded that poor boy," it explained. "The dead preserve their affections longer than the living. Ever since the news that you were groping your way towards us reached the dead in Dorpat he has been here, waiting with touching anxiety to be among the first to greet you, and to remind you of your former kindness to him. Now' your first words to him are an inquiry after another person, of

whom he must have been jealous. Lotta is not here. In all probability she is still alive." It was one of the first curious results of my entrance into the world of the dead that I should have experienced a feeling of momentary disappointment at learning that my ancient sweetheart was among the living, and therefore out of my reach.

I wished to atone for my thoughtless treatment of the little Necromorph, and would have recalled it. But it refused to come back. Its affection for me had received too severe a bruise, and I have not seen it again.

I inquired the name of the rebuking Necromorph, and learned to my delight that I was talking to the shade of my dear friend and venerated master, Helmholtz.

The Necromorph informed me that it had been made acquainted with the course of my investigations at an early stage by its friend the

Necromorph of Count Sastein (which was also present). It had thereupon left its usual place of residence and come to the castle to observe me.

It had not at first understood the character of my researches, inasmuch as the X rays are blank to necromorphic vision. But as soon as I began my experiments with the fluorescent substances of the eye its interest was strongly roused, and it began to hope for the result finally attained.

This hope became a certainty as soon as I directed my attention to the retinal sacs of the serpent. For—and this is, perhaps, one of the most remarkable facts I have gleaned—*the Necromorphs have always been aware that they are visible to the serpent species*.

The Necromorph further claimed that it had influenced me at this stage of my work by means of neurodynamic suggestion. I received this claim with, some caution; but I must reserve the whole subject of neuro-dynamics, and the alleged influence of the dead on the living, for subsequent consideration.

The science of necrology opens up endless questions of the most tempting character, which I hope to deal with as I proceed. But in the present Memoir I propose to confine myself as far as possible to ascertained facts, easily verifiable by other workers in the field, so that the reception of my genuine results may not be prejudiced by the addition of merely speculative matter.

I was still absorbed in conversation with the Necromorph of Helmholtz, when I became aware of a very great commotion among the attentive crowd which still surrounded me.

The shapes drew back to one or the other side, leaving a wide, open passage, down which there advanced, with something of a marching gait, a stately, imperial Necromorph, of whom the others evidently stood in awe.

Abruptly the new-comer halted in front of me, and made a commanding sign to the Necromorph of Helmholtz, which hastened to spell out for it, “Frederick the Great.”

Gathering from these indications that the rank and honours of the living are not abandoned in the necromorphic state, I bowed low before the proud shape. The royal Necromorph deigned to address to me, through Helmholtz, some compliments on my scientific labours and successes, which it would be unbecoming to repeat.

“I have come hither from Potsdam to mark my sense of your services to the dead, by thus enabling them to enter into intercourse with the living. As soon as it is possible for you to place me in communication with my descendant, the Emperor-King, I shall desire him to confer on you the order *pour le mérite*.”

This gracious observation confused me by the prospect it opened up of a time when, instead of the doubtful and probably fraudulent messages from the dead received through the class of spiritualist 11 mediums,” many of them persons of untrustworthy character, our intercourse with the Underworld will be placed on the same assured and regular footing as wireless telegraphy.

Whether this state of things will be wholly advantageous I have not been able to decide. I foresaw a possibility that living monarchs of decided character, like his Majesty the present German Emperor, might not be pleased to receive too much advice or direction, even from so illustrious a predecessor as the great Frederick. It was easy to sec, moreover, that an heir who had reversed his father’s policy, or was acting in any manner against the wishes of the dead, might not care to receive remonstrances from the Necromorphs of his ancestors.

I ventured to put a question to the royal Necromorph in whose presence I stood.

“I realise already, Sire, that many of the ideas and customs of the living continue to prevail in the Underworld. But I naturally have a great deal to learn before I can understand necromorphic conditions, and I am especially puzzled by one question. I am told that my work in this place attracted the notice of the owner of the castle, Count von Sastein. I imagine there must be more than one Necromorph bearing that name, and I should like to know which is regarded as the legitimate lord of the castle.”

This question appeared to arouse much interest and some comment among the shapes. The Necromorph of Helmholtz acted as spokesman in replying, as hitherto.

“You have raised a point on which there is a great controversy among the dead, and therefore you must not expect a decided answer. Formerly the custom was for the founder of a family to exercise an authority over his descendants among the dead. For the last few centuries there has been a tendency on the part of the newly dead to resist that claim, and to assert the principle that the latest comer into the Underworld should displace his ancestors. But I believe I am safe in saying that among us authority usually goes with the possession of neurodynamic energy—that which is known in biomorphic language as strength of character.”

By the motions of the other Necromorphs I judged that this answer commanded their approval on the whole.

Helmholtz next explained that his Majesty had many things to say to me concerning the political situation in the German Empire, but that he preferred to wait until I was able to follow necromorphic speech with case. The present audience was, therefore, terminated.

I bowed low as the high and mighty shade withdrew.

Scarcely had it departed when there was a violent commotion among the luminous throng, and a Necromorph of tall and rigid aspect, with what appeared to be a threatening air, became visible to me, descending from overhead.

Its purpose was so plainly hostile, that I involuntarily shrank back, as though it had been a material form.

In that instant, and just as I was giving way to nervous feeling, I heard my servant's voice calling me from the laboratory.

I had barely time to warn the Necromorph of Helmholtz, which had seemed to share my apprehension, of the necessity there was for concealing my necrological studies for the present from unscientific minds, who might not consider them legitimate, when the door of the dark room was opened by Hermann.

Immediately the Necromorph I was addressing, the one whose appearance had so alarmed me, the shining swarm of the dead, the whole animated Underworld, vanished like a dream, and left me standing alone in the world of sense.

On removing the necroscope from my eyes I found that they were unable to bear the daylight.

I was not sorry to have an opportunity for reflection on the situation in which I found myself, as the first student to bring the deeply interesting forms above described under scientific observation.

I am not guilty of presumption, I trust, in saying that a very wide gulf separates the unsystematical gropings of the ancient necromancers from the methods employed by me, and that necrology before this time has not ranked among the positive sciences.

It is true that the existence of an unseen, submaterial universe, variously named Hades, Sheol, Valhalla, and so on, seems to have been widely known or suspected from very ancient times.

The literature of Egypt and Chaldæa, to say nothing of the more fanciful legends of Orpheus, Odysseus, and others, witnesses to the belief that it is possible for the living to penetrate to this region, which was, however, conceived of rather crudely as having a fixed geographical situation, either subterranean, or in some remote island.

There is also considerable evidence for the view that Necromorphs were from time to time visualised by primitive man.

It has been suggested to me since by the learned Necromorphs of Laud and Wesley, the English theologians, which have made a special study of these questions, that the necrolitic sac, now peculiar to birds and reptiles, formerly persisted in a rudimentary form in the earliest members of the human species, who were thus able to directly perceive Necromorphs.

According to the latter of these two observers, the sac is probably present even now as an atavistic survival in certain individuals, which accounts for the well-authenticated cases of apparitions, some of them recorded of Wesley himself. It may be possible hereafter to examine the eyes of some claimant to such powers, in order to test what I propose to name in honour of its propounder the Wesleyan hypothesis.

If there be any truth in this theory—and, so far, it is the only one which serves to explain the facts—it is clear that evolution has been adverse to the survival of the sac in man. Hence we find that the study of necrological forms has been neglected in modern times, and the belief in their existence almost abandoned.

That the ancients had attained to some kind of intercourse with Necromorphs is unquestionable. I need only refer to the celebrated historical anecdote of the Endor necromancer, and King Saul. The language of this narrative may be justly condemned as poetical, but it appears to have been the practice of most primitive peoples to embody all scientific instruction in verse, and the great materialist thinkers of Greece followed the same practice.

The accounts of necrological phenomena in more recent times are so largely mixed up with hallucination and vulgar superstition, that it does not seem worth while to discuss them. I may say, however, that many

Necromorphs believe that instances have occurred in which they have been able to render themselves perceptible to biomorphic vision.

In the Dark Ages necrology, or necromancy, shared in the general tabu placed on science by the Catholic Church, and its students were visited with severe penalties. It is by no means certain that some amount of discredit does not even now attach to this branch of research in the minds of the German lower orders.

With these remarks I will resume the account of my discoveries in the Underworld, of which I have described my first glimpse.

Chapter V

The City of the Dead

I HAVE described the singular incident which terminated my first glimpse of the Underworld.

Desiring to keep my discovery from the knowledge of others, until the time came for me to lay it before the scientific world in a suitable manner, I went down to take my lunch as usual.

The moment I was free again I returned to the dark room, to renew my interrupted intercourse with the Necromorphs.

On replacing the necroscope I was surprised to find only two forms present, out of the multitude which had greeted my first entrance into the world of sub-visible phenomena.

I had not yet learned to recognise the shapes by their distinctive peculiarities (as I am now able to do). But the foremost of the two Necromorphs at once declared itself as Helmholtz.

I asked with some eagerness what had happened, and what was the Necromorph whose appearance on the scene had created so much dismay.

The answer caused me no little confusion of mind, so thoroughly did it reverse the familiar notions concerning the state of the departed.

“It was Torquemada. We ought to have been more careful to keep your discovery of Necrolite a secret from the elder dead, who regard it with horror. The enlightened dead of the last few hundred years are outnumbered by the ignorant superstitious dead, who still retain the ideas of the Dark Ages, and believe that intercourse between the dead and the living is unlawful.”

I could scarcely bring myself to understand this extraordinary state of things.

“Then are the dead no more enlightened than they were in life?” I asked, in bewilderment. “Do they know nothing more of the conditions which govern the universe, visible and invisible?”

It was the second Necromorph that now undertook to answer me.

"Our state appears to be one of probation," it explained. "In losing our bodies we do not, as you have seen already, lose at once those ideas and interests which go to make up personality, and we are, therefore, unfit to pass at once into a new and different life. During the necromorphic state, which lasts on an average about two thousand years, we gradually wear out and forget the passions of our former biomorphic state. On arriving at a neutral and peaceful condition we cease to be Necromorphs, and disappear

into some inner and deeper state of being, of which we as yet know no more than the living know of us."

I received this information with the deepest wonder. While I was pondering on it the Necromorph proceeded:

"There are two conflicting views held by thoughtful Necromorphs. The Materialists consider that the necromorphic state represents, as it were, the running down of a watch, of which life was the winding-up, and that there is nothing beyond. The Idealists view our present state as one of transition from a lower life to a higher, and they compare the living to a caterpillar, and the dead to a chrysalis, from which a glorious butterfly will emerge."

I could not but be impressed by this exposition, which convinced me that my instructor must be the Necromorph of no ordinary man. I ventured to ask its name.

"Goethe," was the answer.

The knowledge that I was honoured by the presence of Germany's greatest mind overwhelmed me. Although famous in his lifetime as a poet chiefly, the scientific world has long ago recognised that Goethe's real greatness was as a scientific philosopher. His studies in connection with plants, especially, represent the most brilliant work ever done in the department of comparative morphology. Science has long regretted that such a mind should have frittered away its powers on the production of mere literature, and I fully appreciated the great gain to the new study of necrology of this gifted collaborator.

Goethe's Necromorph was evidently pleased by my reception of its name.

"The dead and the living have much to learn from each other," it observed. "As you will see from what we have already told you, the

Underworld is still practically in the mediæval stage. The bigots of Catholicism fear any intercourse with the living lest it shake the authority of their Church. And, unfortunately, they are supported by the bigots of Materialism, who cannot bear that the living should be encouraged in the belief of immortality."

Although I had too much reason to know the strength of the prejudice referred to, I ventured to put in a word in defence of the attitude of so many scientists towards these problems.

"It has been dinned into the ears of the past generation that the belief in anything above and beyond the dust of which we are made was inseparably bound up with the *statement* of that belief, as it presented itself to the ignorant monks of the darkest age in the world's history. Scientists have been told that if they dared to cherish a faith in a Higher Power, or a hope in a Hereafter, they would thereby commit themselves to

the support of every childish notion and uncivilised practice to be found in that museum of savage superstitions—the mediæval Church. Honourable and brave men have found themselves obliged to say, ' We *know* those things are false and unworthy, and, lest we countenance them, we will say nothing about other things which we hope may be true and inspiring.'"

The Necromorph bowed with something of a solemn air.

"Let the responsibility rest on the right shoulders," it responded. "Meanwhile, I hope that the discovery which you have now been permitted to make may usher in a happier day, when men may realise that words are nothing, as compared with things, and that even the noblest religion is but a shadowy and imperfect expression, adapted to our gross and limited faculties, of the glorious Truth."

For some moments nothing more passed.

Accustomed, as I had been for many years, to conceal my inner hope as if it were a crime, I found myself profoundly moved by the prospect of a day to come when it would be possible for an honest mind to confess its faith without soiling itself with coarse and ugly imaginations.

When I spoke again it was to question the great Shade on a subject of deep interest—that passage from the biomorphic to the necromorphic state, which we call necrosis or death.

The Necromorph of Goethe answered me.

"Until you understand more about the structure and conditions of Necromorphs it is not easy to explain to you what actually takes place in the moment of death. I can describe to you, however, my own sensations and recollections of the change."

I eagerly accepted the suggestion. Who has not heard of the death-bed of Goethe, and of that last exclamation, "Light, more light!" which has hitherto been interpreted as a prayer?

The poet's Necromorph expressed itself, as nearly as I can recollect, thus:—

"Like most of the Living who are not violently snatched away, I lay in a state of great weakness for some time before the end. But this weakness was purely physical. I retained my inner faculties to the full, but found it increasingly difficult to exert them through the medium of the body, which seemed to be oppressing me. If you were ever, as a child, buried in sand, and compelled to struggle out, you will be able to realise my sensations.

"My efforts to use my bodily senses became at last so disagreeable that I almost ceased from them. I found myself striving to escape, as it were, from the bonds which held me. Unfortunately, these struggles of mine were mistaken by the watchers for struggles to put off the moment of release, and they sought to prolong them in consequence by artificial means.

"At last there came the blissful moment when I was aware that I should shortly be free. Once, twice, and thrice I seemed to escape from the body's oppression, only to fall under it again. In one of these momentary escapes I had a distinct glimpse of a luminous world awaiting me, and so powerfully was I excited by the revelation that I tried to speak for the last time. I am told by those who have since died, and met me in the Underworld, that I uttered the word 'Light!'

"The last struggle was succeeded by a shock, followed by dizziness. I can only compare what happened to an engine being suddenly reversed. When this dizziness passed away I knew that I had died.

“I distinctly remember saying to myself, ‘I am dead at last!’ The sensation was one of pleasurable relief. My Death-Shape, or Necromorph, as I understand you call it, lay extended within the nervous system of my late body, as if in a suit of clothes, but I now realised that the body had lost its detaining power, and become, as far as I was concerned, no more than a cloud or mist, through which I could pass without experiencing resistance.

“The Necromorph, in short, is composed of ether, and therefore ordinary matter offers no more resistance to us than the air offers to you.

“The Death-Shape, as I was now to learn, responds to the will far more readily than does the living body. As soon as I felt a wish to emerge from my dead body I found myself rising slowly like a man floating up through water. There was a curious momentary feeling of resistance, as though the Death-Shape were coming *unstuck*, so to speak, from its bodily case; but this may have been due to imagination simply.

“For a little time I moved awkwardly, like a swimmer who has not learned to balance himself. It also took me a considerable time to accustom myself to the penetrability of matter. All the Dead have this experience at first, and constantly find themselves stopping in front of walls and similar obstacles, as though they could hinder their passage.”

There were several things in this statement which I felt would require further explanation. In the meantime I ventured to ask the Necromorph:

“Can you tell me anything about your reception in the Underworld?”

“It is the custom for a new-comer to be taken charge of on his death by those who most loved him in life—not by those whom he loved most. I use the word love in its spiritual sense, for there is no other in the Underworld.

“I was not aware of this at first, yet I was immeasurably glad to be greeted by Schiller. His Death-Shape approached me as soon as I had quitted my corpse, and led me to a region underground.

“The newly dead have to learn the language of their new existence, just as the newly born do, and my dear friend had the task of teaching me. He confessed to me that in life he had never dared to make known the full strength of his attachment, because my great fame and the honours paid me in the Ducal Court daunted him, and he feared that his friendship for me might be attributed to the unworthy motive of ambition."

I was struck particularly by the reference to an underground region, and I asked the poet if there were indeed an Underworld in the material sense.

"Undoubtedly there is," was the reply. "Are you not aware that the dead are unable to brave the light of the sun?"

"I supposed that was a superstition."

"On the contrary. Light is, as you know, a powerful vibration transmitted through the ether. Now, Death-Shapes, being ethereal, are powerfully affected by this vibration. A Death-Shape exposed to a ray of light is as helpless as a swimmer swept away by a cataract. For that reason we retire underneath the surface of the earth during the daytime. The cock, which warns us by his crowing that it is time for us to seek shelter, is called the 4 Necromorph's Friend.'"

I listened in growing wonder to this singular confirmation of a belief long dismissed as a fable by modern science.

"The great City of the Dead," the glorious Necromorph proceeded, "is situated at the Pole. There during your winter the sun is never seen, and the dead pass their whole time above the surface of the earth. We cannot feel heat and cold, and we inhabit the vast frozen hills of ice.

Millions and millions of the dead gather there, and pass their time undisturbed by mortal fears and tumults. The whole Circle of the Pole is lit by the throngs of luminous shapes, glittering through the ice world, and there sit the stately assemblies which regulate the affairs of the dead.

"There Alexander the Great has reigned for two thousand years, unable to grow old, after that intensely passionate life. There Napoleon sits beside him, and waits the hour to take his place on the Throne of the Dead. The dead of Asia obey Jengiz and Timur.

"There Socrates yet lingers in extreme old age, almost ready to flicker out and pass away, and there the thinkers and teachers of the living learn their errors, and trim the lamp of Philosophy that it may burn with a purer light.

"There is Shakespeare, to whom the Necromorphs of all poets do homage, and Dante, united with Beatrice in a different Underworld to that of his dream.

“But the tremendous news of your descent into the Underworld will shake the City of the Dead, and strange events will now come to pass.”

I have recorded as well as I am able the words of the inspired Necromorph. Overcome by its prophetic emotion, it signed to Helmholtz to take its place in the dialogue, and from my honoured master’s Necromorph I learned that it was deemed advisable for my future interviews with the Death-Shapes to take place at a lonely spot in the forest after dark.

It appeared to me that the Necromorphs apprehended a danger of some kind, for me or for themselves, but of this danger they showed a visible reluctance to speak.

Chapter VI

The Life of the Dead

AS it could serve no scientific purpose to relate in detail the progress of my intercourse with the Necromorphs during the time I was acquiring their language, I propose now to summarise in a brief note some of the principal facts ascertained by me concerning these forms, and the conditions of their existence.

In this way I shall be able to save the time of the scientific reader for whom the personal side of the investigation possesses no interest. On the other hand, if this Memoir should come under the notice of readers who require no scientific corroboration of the statements it contains, such readers may pass over the present section.

I need not apologise again for imperfections due to my training as a physical chemist, which necessarily exposes me to many errors and shortcomings when I attempt the work of a physiologist. It is my hope that the following note will serve to bring other and better qualified workers into the field, when I shall gladly resign to them this part of the subject.

This note may be considered by professional biologists more worthy of their attention, however, from the circumstance that in preparing it I have been assisted throughout by the learned Necromorph of Helmholtz. Much valuable aid in the way of information and suggestions has also been furnished me by the Necromorphs of Liebnitz, Huxley, Giordano Bruno, Aristotle, Hume, and Thomas Aquinas, all of whom I desire to thank.

I was unable to use the suggestions kindly offered by the Necromorphs of Swedenborg, Plato, Hegel, and Comte, as they did not appear to me likely to carry weight with specialists.

Name.—The word Necromorph[*] has been compounded by me from the two Greek words νεκρός, dead, and μορφή a shape.

Classification.—The first question presented by the study of Necromorphs is, of course, whether these deeply interesting and important forms should be classified as organic or inorganic.

On this subject the widest diversity of opinion prevails among the Necromorphs themselves. The vast majority, no doubt, incline strongly to the view that they are organisms, on account of their possession of consciousness and other functions. But against this, the popular view, must be set the weighty opinion of such authorities as Dalton and Avogadro among physicists, and Cuvier, Huxley, and Lamarcke among biologists, all of whose Necromorphs regard themselves as inorganic.

The Necromorph of the greatest of all names in science, the immortal Darwin, has declined to commit itself to a definite pronouncement in the present state of its information, but is inclined to assign these forms to a new division, for which it provisionally puts forward the name of extra-organic, or ultra-natural.

Tentatively, therefore, the Necromorph may be described as a doubtfully organic form, awaiting classification.

Morphology.—The structure of the Necromorph is ethereal. It is therefore indifferent to matter, through which it passes without resistance. I need hardly remark on the pleasure it gave me, as a physical chemist, to receive this final corroboration of the theory of ether, elaborated by so many workers, the existence of the supposed substance known to science as ether having hitherto rested on a basis of hypothesis rather than actual evidence.

According to my Necrological authorities, ether is known to them in three states, which they describe as physicoid, neuroid, and dynamoid, much as common matter is found in the three states so long known as solid, liquid, and gaseous.

The physicoid ether is the substance already postulated by science as the medium of light waves. It is the state of ether most nearly assimilated to matter, with which it forms, as it were, the connecting link.

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* The spelling in the original is “Nekromorph” throughout.

—*Translator*.

The neuroid ether is more subtle, bearing much the same relation to the other that liquid bears to solid matter. Dynamoid ether is more rarefied still, being imperceptible even to Necromorphs. Its existence is assumed by them to account for certain rather obscure and alarming phenomena, of which I shall have to speak when I come to deal with the enemies of the dead.

The structure of the Necromorph is partly physicoid and partly neuroid, while the presence of dynamoid is as yet only suspected.

As might have been expected, the outer shell or skin of the Necromorph is physicoid; hence its capacity for radiating waves visible to the human eye through a sufficiently fluorescent medium.

Many Necromorphs believe that instances have occurred in which they have been able to make themselves visible to the living while under the influence of strong nervous excitement. More especially is this believed to have taken place in cases where a powerful sympathy existed during life between the seer and the seen. Similar claims are put forward on behalf of Necromorphs whose death was sudden and violent in its character.

As the evidence for these alleged incidents is very doubtful and conflicting, and as I find the whole subject is avoided by scientific Necromorphs as beneath their attention, I will leave this branch of the subject for examination by others.

Little is known at present concerning the internal structure of these remarkable forms. Partly owing to the prejudiced attitude of the Underworld towards science, and partly to the lack of appliances such as we possess, necromorphic students are very much dependent on the progress of biomorphic inquiry, which the higher intelligences among them follow with keen interest, often anticipating the results before they are foreseen by the biomorphic worker.

The Necromorph of the celebrated Paracelsus has assured me that it had long known of the X rays, and had influenced Röntgen to observe their action on the sensitised plate. However, all such claims seem to me to savour of extravagance, and I have not encouraged them.

Physiology.—The existence of the Necromorph is believed to be dependent on the necrosis or death of the ordinary living organism (biomorph) .

Among the great variety of opinions put forth on this obscure and difficult point, the one which seems to be gaining ground steadily in necrological circles is that which regards normal death as the result of necromorphic evolution.

According to this view, which has in its favour the high authority of such Necromorphs as Liebnitz, Redi, and Cuvier, the Necromorph is present potentially within the nervous system of the biomorph from the first, much as the chicken is present in the egg. It is supposed to grow by feeding on certain tissues in the interior of the system, to whose outline the Necromorph

is necessarily adjusted. These tissues are charged with a fluid known to necrologists as vital neuride, and on this fluid becoming completely absorbed by the Necromorph, the material body is reduced to the condition of a corpse.

While this theory presents many analogies with other theories approved by specialists, I consider that it should be received with caution, as being merely the working hypothesis which best explains the facts. In the present state of our knowledge vital neuride must be regarded as a scientific postulate rather than as a substance whose existence is proved.

In its free state, that is to say, after its release from the body, the Necromorph maintains its existence by absorbing ionium from the electricity which serves it in the place of an atmosphere. This function takes place equally at every point on the outer surface of the Necromorph, and

thus resembles the action of the pores of the skin in a biomorph. The surplus electricity is rejected in the form of rays, and hence arises that luminous appearance which is perhaps the most remarkable characteristic of these forms.

It is to this function that the Necromorph of Darwin attributes the persistence in Necromorphs of a structural shell, which would otherwise tend to become rudimentary and disappear. The superficial area afforded by this shell is required, in order that the Necromorph may obtain the necessary amount of nourishment.

The sterility of these forms, which may be compared with that of working bees, is compensated by their extraordinary longevity.

At first the affections and interests of the biomorph are found to persist in their full force, but all except the purely intellectual sympathies gradually decay in the withdrawal of the stimuli

furnished by biomorphic conditions. This decay is said to be assisted by the antiseptic action of the electric currents in the interior of the earth. The process of purification is believed by mediæval Catholic Necromorphs to be hastened by the pious offices of their living friends and descendants.

On the whole, the biomorphic form with which the Necromorph seems to have most affinity is no doubt a chrysalis. Ancient necrologists had only one word, *larva*, for both; and though their empirical ideas may seem beneath the notice of modern specialists, I find that most thoughtful Necromorphs believe their condition to be an intermediate one, preparatory to a higher life.

The most numerous party among the inhabitants of the Underworld, namely, the followers of Buddha, expect their present stage to be followed by reincarnation in a new biomorph. Such a view hardly calls for serious

treatment, and I should not mention it but for a really extraordinary fact which seems to rest on unimpeachable testimony, namely, that the founder of the cult *never became necromorphic*. In other words, the death of Buddha was not followed by the appearance of his Necromorph in the Underworld, a circumstance on which his followers rely to prove their contention that the Teacher entered into a state which they name Nirvana.

I refrain for the present from any discussion of the accounts given me concerning the visit to the Underworld of another sacred Figure.

Generally speaking, the authorities by whom I have been guided discourage speculation on the topic of the Hereafter, in the complete absence of material for a scientific judgment.

The stability of the Necromorph is very great. It appears to be almost free from pathological conditions.

The passing away, or revitalisation, of the Necromorph is a very gentle process. Its luminosity gradually fades away, its outline shrinks and shrivels up, and as the last glimmer of light goes out nothing is left but a tiny snow of physicoid dust.

Distribution.—Necromorphs are found generally distributed over the surface of the globe, with some tendency to prefer the scenes of their biomorphic activity. These preferences yield in time to the process of purification already described.

In addition to this horziontal distribution, however, the Necromorphs are also distributed vertically in accordance with a very remarkable and mysterious force known to my authorities as *khama*, whose action bears a certain resemblance to that of gravity.

Chapter VII

The Enemies of the Dead

AS soon as I had acquired some facility in carrying on intercourse with the inhabitants of the Underworld, I found myself literally besieged by vast numbers of these shapes, all anxious to convey messages through me to the Living. Among the Necromorphs who thus embarrassed me with their commands and solicitations I need only mention such names as Napoleon, Bismarck, and Murat, among rulers, and Schopenhauer, Poe, Carlyle, and De Maupassant among philosophers and men of letters.

Some of the interesting conversations which I had with these and other Necromorphs of fame I intend to record hereafter. But I was obliged to excuse myself from a great many of these commissions on the ground that my interest in the Underworld was not that of a mere descriptive writer, but that I was a serious student, anxious to place the science of necrology on a firm and rational basis.

It was necessary therefore for me to confine my intercourse at the outset as much as possible to the Necromorphs of scientists and thinkers, who could assist me in forming clear and accurate conceptions of the invisible universe and its conditions.

It was a singular circumstance that in doing this I should have been aided chiefly by the Necromorphs of two men of genius known in their lifetime as men of letters rather than as scientists.

There appears to be no fixed rule with regard to the persistence of biomorphic interests and pursuits in the Necromorph. Generally the Necromorph may be said to prolong the biomorph; but on the other hand, where the living man was driven from his true course by adverse circumstances, his real nature asserts itself after death.

I have already described my first interview with our great German poet. The second of the two Necromorphs to which I am so much indebted was that of the wonderful American genius, Poe.

The coming of this strangely brilliant Necromorph was announced to me by that of Helmholtz, which continued to act as master of the ceremonies between me and the rest of the Departed.

It was in the middle of the night, in the forest of Sastein, and I had just adjusted my necrolitic lenses, when the Necromorph of Helmholtz warned me:—

“Edgar Allan Poe has crossed the Atlantic to meet you.”

“Do you mean the poet?” I asked, in some surprise.

“His poetical works are not remembered in the Underworld,” was the answer. “We learn from the lately Dead that even in the Upper World his fame is entirely apart from that of ordinary men of letters. Among us he has long been recognised as a transcendent scientific thinker. His Eureka, indeed, is regarded as the first, and so far the only, attempt to explain the universe.”

I was astonished by this description of a work of which I had never so much as heard.

I gazed about in expectation, when all at once I perceived a Shape arising from out of the earth, of a mien and colour terrible to look upon.

Instead of the faint violet radiance of the other Necromorphs, the form of Poe was clothed in the burning lustre of vermilion; and it moved with a harsh, imprisoned gait, like one who had not lost the earthly sense of weight and labour, so that as I looked at it I felt as if it were alive.

“My time with you is short,” the Necromorph said, addressing me abruptly. “I cannot easily remain above the surface of the earth.”

“Why?” I ventured to ask. “Is it possible for Necromorphs to feel the attraction of gravitation?”

The flame-like Necromorph shook its head.

“We are subject,” it said, “to another force, whose operation is not understood among the Living.”

I at once earnestly requested the Necromorph to explain to me the nature of the force in question; and I now record the exposition as I received it.

“The force or law—for these two words are merely different names for the same thing—is known to modern Necromorphs as khama.”

“The khama of the Buddhists?” I inquired.

“The Buddhists have furnished us with the word,” was the answer, “but their conceptions are gross and tinged with superstition. Khama is a perfectly natural force, which acts on bodies of ethereal structure exactly as gravity acts on material bodies, with certain differences due to causes which science has not yet fully explained.

“Thus, Necromorphs appear to be subject to this force in different degrees, just as material bodies differ in weight. The normal or average Necromorph is held by its khama in a middle region, corresponding roughly to the surface of the planet. Other Necromorphs, on which the force acts less powerfully, are found in the atmosphere, and even farther still from the ground. A third class—to which I belong— possess an excessive degree of khama, or are exceptionally subject to the pressure of this mysterious force, and we consequently find ourselves located in a subterranean region, from which it is difficult for us to emerge.”

I listened with the keenest interest to this most unexpected information. I begged the Necromorph to enlighten me further.

“So far as can be ascertained in the present state of our knowledge, the degree in which Necromorphs are subject to the pressure of this force depends on the presence or absence of certain characters, which it is extremely difficult to describe without lapsing into unscientific language.

“Perhaps I can best explain my own theory to you by asking you to conceive of the entire universe, visible and invisible, as being moved towards harmonious life by a great Tendency, as yet known to us only in broken glimpses. The natural laws so far explored by science are merely scattered threads in this great Woof of the World; we hear no more than a few bars of the marvellous and majestic Tune. The instincts of the savage, the barbarous superstitions of primitive man, the hostile religious systems which rend civilised society, all these arc efforts and strivings on the part of men to catch the notes of the mighty Music, and imitate them on their imperfect instruments.

“Some tell us that the true Keynote has been struck in the life of some sacred Character. But those who assure us of that most firmly have been guilty of the most cruel and aggravated discords in their attempt at echoing the sacred music.

“Life, then, should be regarded as an effort on the part of the living creature to acquire the power of moving in harmony with the great Harmony. We are children learning to dance.

“The condition of the Dead results from the

degree in which this aim is achieved by the Living. The Necromorphs of such as have reached nearest to harmony with the Universe are most free from the force which holds us down. We, on the contrary”—and here I thought I saw the vermilion radiance of the Necromorph deepen and darken—“we who have lived violent lives, at war with harmony, and have not mastered the Steps of the Dance, we find ourselves dejected among the subterranean fires.”

There was a sense of tragedy in this confession of the proud Necromorph. While orthodox scientists may receive its views with some distrust, as bearing a perilous resemblance to certain exploded superstitions concerning morality and a Divine Power, it seemed to me that the language used was perfectly consistent with the belief in Evolution. To soothe the Necromorph, I spoke respectfully of its literary fame.

“All that is wearisome to me now,” it responded.

“In life I sought beauty in words and thought, now I know of only one beauty, the beauty of actions. I was born in a country in which my spirit was always an exile, a country with the soul of a village in the body of a continent. I was fit for great capitals, and the life of old, mysterious civilisations, and I suffered and pined in the New England shop-parlour. I avenged my sufferings on those who were unconscious of having injured me, on the village dunces who were thrust into renown by village vanity. My pen was my dagger, and the writing was in blood.”

I could not wholly understand these passionate expressions, but I found it possible, as a physical chemist, to conceive of differences in the vital neuride, or other substance of which the necromorphic body is composed, rendering it more or less subject to such a force as khama. Just as the weight of material bodies varies with their density, so what corresponds to the weight of ethereal bodies may vary with the intensity of vibration of their particles, or, as the Necromorph put it, with the violence of their emotions.

However, the subject must be considered obscure at present, and further investigation will be required before we can hope to see the law of khama in the same clear light as that of gravity.

I asked the wondrous Necromorph to tell me if its existence differed in any way from that of the Necromorphs that occupy the upper zones. It replied:—

“The Necromorphs whom you have hitherto met are free from grief and trouble, though they do not partake in the active happiness of those Necromorphs above them who move through the blue spaces—the Necromorphs of those who in life subdued their passions and framed their natures to the Celestial pattern. The Necromorphs below are conscious of their fallen state, and suffer for it. We move among the igneous rocks and in the fiery oceans which roar through the hollow caverns of the planet, and there we meet and fly from strange pursuers, the Companions of the Condemned.”

I was deeply excited by this hint that there were yet other forms awaiting discovery, forms not less interesting to science, perhaps, than the Necromorphs themselves.

I asked the burning Shape before me to tell me something of the appearance and manner of these Haunters of the Depths.

“I cannot tell you of Their form and shape,” it answered, “for these Enemies of ours are invisible to Necromorphs. It may be that it is reserved for you to discover some medium which will reveal them to the sight, if not of the Dead, of the Living. We know of Them only by the effect wrought on ourselves. To us they are as deeply hostile Wills, bent on our torment.”

“But have they no bodies—even of ethereal structure?” I asked in bewilderment. “Is there no contact between you and them? Is there nothing corresponding to the sense of touch in the Living, which assures you of the presence of these hostile forms?”

“Nothing,” was the emphatic reply. “They are not the objects of anything resembling the living senses. They strike as an electric shock strikes the living.”

In order not to mislead, I have been careful to set down the description of these extraordinary forms in the exact words of the Necromorph, as well as I can recollect them. In the absence of any further indication of their nature I have deemed it best to name them provisionally Dynamorphs (strength shapes).

I inquired if the Dynamorphs ever quitted their subterranean region, and if they possessed power to do mischief to biomorphs.

The Necromorph of Poe at first seemed reluctant to answer these questions.

“We have no intelligent intercourse with our Pursuers,” it said at length. “Their enmity is so blind, Their attacks so sudden and relentless, that we are unable to form any clear ideas concerning them. But it is believed by us that They do sometimes break out of Sheol, and that They have sometimes wrought strange and frightful evils to the Living.”

“Of what character?” I asked.

“They are said to enter into human shapes, and control them to their undoing,” was the terrible response.

Almost as the Necromorph was uttering the words I saw a ghastly change come over it. Its vermilion tint faded suddenly to the pale hue of sulphur, and with a wild and writhing motion of its figure it vanished downwards from my sight.

Chapter VIII

The Blessed

WHEN first elaborating my ideas on the subject of ultra-chromatic rays, I had recognised the possibility of the existence of forms of life, or at least of organisms, invisible to our ordinary sense of sight.

I was not altogether taken by surprise, therefore, when I learned from the Necromorph of Poe that such forms, in fact, did exist, and that they played a part towards certain Necromorphs (the Condemned) not unlike that played by savage beasts towards primitive man.

It was more startling to have it suggested that the Dynamorphs possessed the power of injuring the living. I could not shut my eyes to the fact that this suggestion, if seriously entertained, might be found to throw some light on the demonology which has entered into so many religions, including the popular cult of modern Europe. Inasmuch as there is no subject which science has so sternly tabooed, and excluded even from discussion, I foresaw that I should wholly forfeit any claim to consideration from my brother specialists if I permitted myself to be drawn into any investigation of this obscure and dangerous topic.

On the disappearance of Poe’s Necromorph, I turned to my faithful friend and counsellor among the shades, the Necromorph of Helmholtz. What was my distress to perceive that it was in a state of violent agitation and alarm!

“The Enemies!” was all it could say in answer to my anxious questioning. “The Enemies of the Dead are all around us.”

The Necromorph’s strange emotion communicated itself to me. Involuntarily I turned my gaze in different directions, without seeing anything, however.

“You cannot see them, neither can I,” the Necromorph explained. “But I am conscious of their neighbourhood, just as the Living are conscious of a gathering thunderstorm.”

“And what do you fear, then?” I asked. “What are these forms able to do to you?”

“You have just seen,” was the reply. “You saw what became of him.”

It pointed to the place where the vermilion Necromorph had stood, and trembled as it did so. It was evidently its belief that some prowling Dynamorph from below had wrought the ghastly change and disappearance of the unhappy Necromorph.

“And are you also liable to the attacks of the Dynamorphs?” I asked. “Have you no means of protection against them?”

“They only visit our world at rare intervals,” was the answer, “and we do not yet fully know the laws which govern their coming and going. But ——”

The Necromorph hesitated, and seemed unwilling to proceed.

I urged it to complete its explanation.

“You have learnt now that there are other Necromorphs inhabiting an upper world wherein the Enemies are never found. These have no fear, and in their neighbourhood we feel secure. It is to them that some of us appeal for aid against the Adversary.”

Hardly had the Necromorph thus spoken when I looked up and saw descending from above a Shape so exquisitely bright that I could scarcely think of it as necrological. Its radiance was many-coloured, like the plumage of a dove, and changed with every motion of its tendrils.

The happy Necromorph did not alight on the ground, but hovered a foot or two above, seemingly without the necessity of exertion.

“Who art thou?” I said, involuntarily addressing it in the language of deep emotion.

“In life my name was Teresa,” the Necromorph replied. “But who art thou, that seemest able to perceive me with mortal eyes?”

I felt embarrassed by this question from the Necromorph of a Catholic saint. Remembering how the Necromorph of Torquemada had rudely interrupted my first interview with the Dead, I feared this beautiful Shape would be offended if I spoke the truth.

"I am a man of science," I answered deferentially. "In seeking to investigate the ethereal vibrations which lie outside the narrow compass of our senses, I found a substance which intercepts the radiance of forms like thine, and changes it into a light visible to the eyes of the

The lustrous Form wavered and quivered.

"And is this knowledge lawful?" it demanded. "Hast thou sought and obtained the permission of the Holy Office for thy discoveries?"

"I have not done so," I confessed. "It is no longer the custom of scientific men to ask the licence of a priest to learn the ways of unseen power."

The Necromorph shuddered again.

"I have heard something of these changes in the world," it responded. "Alas! I know not whether it be lawful or no for me to converse with thee."

"The guilt, if guilt there be, is mine alone," I answered boldly. "Thou hast not revealed thyself; I have made my own way into the Unseen World."

The Necromorph lingered, evidently curious, for it had been a woman.

"Hast thou no message for the Living?" I went on to ask. "Wilt thou not tell me something of thy happy state?"

"I am in Paradise," answered the Necromorph. "Only one joy is left, which I still wait for to the end of the world, when I shall look upon the Divine Face."

A hush fell over me. What did this bright Shape know?—how much did it merely hope? I dared not utter that question.

"Hast thou companions other than the Necromorphs of the blessed?" was all I ventured to demand.

"Many and many," it replied. "The Upper World is filled with multitudes of glorious Forms, only they do not communicate with us by the direct means that we employ between ourselves."

"How then?"

"We know of Them as flashes of white light, and feel Them as faint perfumed Breath; when

They pass near us we are filled with joy, and when They breathe upon us our rapture is like that of a bride in the arms of the bridegroom.”

And while the Necromorph spoke these words it became transfigured, as if there shone through it a great white light; and I, even I, Karl Lücke, felt my hair stirred as though a Breath came and went.

When I recovered from the exaltation into which I had been thrown, I found myself alone in the forest of Sastein; for the Blessed Necromorph had left me in that transport, and the Necromorph of Helmholtz had silently withdrawn.

Chapter IX

The End

AT this point in Lücke's Memoir a considerable change is apparent in the character of the handwriting. The remaining paragraphs are abrupt and disjointed, and their language is not always strictly scientific. In justice to this great man it should be remembered that he was suffering in health at this time, as the result of his protracted labours. What follows should not be allowed to prejudice the reception of the serious part of the Memoir.

THE PNEUMORPHS.—The forms alleged by Saint Teresa's Necromorph to inhabit the upper ether appeared to be pneumatic in structure. It is unfortunate that this word πνευμα should be the one used by the New Testament writers, and usually translated "spirit."[*] I fear it will be hazardous to lay this discovery, if it be one, before the Chemical Society, as it may cause them to confound my studies with discredited superstitions such as the angelology of the Middle Ages. I feel convinced that were I to reproduce the Necromorph's allusion to the possible vision of a THEOMORPH, I should be asked to resign from the Society.

It is very strange that nearly all races of men, all ages, and all religions should attest the existence of some forms of ethereal or non-material structure. Without claiming to have definitely proved the existence of such forms, I think I may fairly say that I have placed the question on a footing which will require and justify the serious attention of specialists.

[*] German "Geist," which is our "Ghost"; cf. "Holy Ghost" or "Holy Spirit."

THE DYNAMORPHS.—It is a remarkable fact that savages, who appeal' far more sensitive to the influence of invisible forces than we are, should, generally speaking, seek to propitiate evil spirits rather than good ones. The Dynamorphs, under whatever name they are known, and in whatever way they are conceived of, play a very important part in the life of savage races. . . .

I have just returned from a deeply interesting and even exciting interview with the Necromorph of Bacon. Not the Elizabethan essayist and lawyer, but the great Bacon, the discoverer of gunpowder and the founder of modern science.

The Necromorph (which is one of the Condemned) informs me that my intrusion into the sub-visible universe has excited the indignation and resentment of the dangerous forms which it speaks of by the mediæval name “devils.” It has hinted to me that the Dynamorphs are under the government of a supreme ruler, or Arch-Dynamorph, known to the Condemned as the Evil One. The report of my discoveries has been conveyed to this potent Form, and the Necromorph of Bacon entertains serious apprehensions as to the consequences for me. It has advised me to abandon further researches for a time.

It appears to me that I cannot accept this advice without being false to the cause of science. I should be no more justified in giving up my work on account of such dangers than a botanist would be in refusing to penetrate to the sources of the Amazon because of the malaria which infests the region. Moreover, I still cling to the belief that such dangers are rather imaginary than real.

THE ARCH-DYNAMORPH.—A very extraordinary thing has happened. I have received what purports to be a message from the Chief of the strange Forms, whose existence I am assured of by so many Necromorphs.

The message was delivered to me by the Necromorph of Alexander Borgia, the celebrated Pope. This Necromorph is of a very deep orange tint, something between the colour of fire and the colour of sulphur. Its manner was exceedingly courteous, and even flattering. It entirely contradicts the story of Bacon’s Necromorph, and assures me that the Dynamorphs are by no means always hostile to the living. Against me and my discoveries they have no angry feeling whatever.

In short, my discoveries, and my entrance into the Underworld, have made me an object of interest to the Arch-Dynamorph Itself. This formidable and terrific Power has offered to appear before me in a visible Shape, and has invited me to meet It in the forest of Sastein, at the usual spot. I was too much bewildered by the tremendous invitation to accept it. I have asked for time to consider what I shall do.

I am tempted to consult my English friend. But I fear to encourage the superstitious ideas which he tells me exist among the peasantry of the neighbourhood. I have observed during the last few days that I have become an object of suspicion, or at least of watchfulness, to this friend, as well as to my household.

... I have decided to accept the invitation. I have communicated my decision to the Necromorph of Borgia, which appeared to be greatly pleased.

The Necromorph has given me certain instructions for the meeting. In order that the Evil One—that is to say the Arch-Dynamorph— may render Itself visible to me, I am to carry a steel wand. Doubtless there is some obscure law of optics at work here.

... I am in some pain. The atmosphere appears to be unusually charged with electricity. I am conscious of a feeling of depression amounting to fear.

The discovery I hope to make to-night will be the greatest of all—an epoch in science. It will place beyond doubt the existence of ultra-biological forms possessed of volition and intelligence.

... I am afraid, most fearfully afraid!

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost!

(The rest of Professor Lücke’s Memoir, comprising the Appendix, is a mass of charred fragments. This is the more to be regretted as the Appendix appears to have contained the formulas for the construction of the lenses described in the foregoing narrative, and until the necroscope carelessly destroyed by the servant has been replaced, the researches commenced by Lücke are at a standstill. I am unable to account for the fire which seems to have consumed these important leaves of the MS., but it was probably due to some accidental electrical discharge.)

THE END

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About the Author

George Allen Upward (Worcester 20 September 1863 – Wimborne 12 November 1926) was a British poet, lawyer, politician and teacher. His work was included in the first anthology of Imagist poetry, Des Imagistes, which was edited by Ezra Pound and published in 1914. He was a first cousin once removed of Edward Upward. His parents were George and Mary Upward, and he was survived by an elder sister (Mary) Edith Upward.

Upward was brought up as a member of the Plymouth Brethren and trained as a lawyer at the Royal University of Dublin (now University College Dublin). While living in Dublin, he wrote a pamphlet in favour of Irish Home Rule.

Upward later worked for the British Foreign Office in Kenya as a judge. Back in Britain, he defended Havelock Wilson and other labour leaders and ran for election as a Lib-Lab candidate, taking 659 votes in Merthyr at the 1895 general election.

He wrote two books of poetry, Songs of Ziklag (1888) and Scented Leaves from a Chinese Jar. He also published a translation Sayings of Confucious and a volume of autobiography, Some Personalities (1921).

Upward wrote a number of now-forgotten novels: The Prince of Balkistan (1895), A Crown of Straw (1896), A Bride's Madness (1897), The Accused Princess (1900) (source: Duncan, p. xii), ""The International Spy: Being a Secret History of the Russo-Japanese War" (1905), and Athelstane Ford. His 1910 novel "The Discovery of the Dead" is a collected fantasy (listed in Bleiler) dealing with the emerging science of Necrology.

His 1913 book The Divine Mystery is an anthropological study of Christian mythology.

In 1908, Upward self-published a book (originally written in 1901) which he apparently thought would be Nobel Prize material: The New Word. This book is today known as the first citation of the word "Scientology", however there was no delineation in this book of its definition by Upward. It is unknown whether L. Ron Hubbard, the founder of the Scientology-organization, knew of this book.

In 1917 the British Museum refused to take Upward's manuscripts, "on the grounds that the writer was still alive," and Upward burned them (source: Duncan, p. xi).

He shot himself in November 1926. Ezra Pound would a decade later satirically remark that this was due to his disappointment after hearing of George Bernard Shaw's Nobel Prize award which Shaw won in 1925.

Books

Secrets of the Courts of Europe. Pearson’s Magazine, (serialized, 1896)
The Princess of Balkistan, 1895
A Crown of Straw, 1896
A Bride’s Madness, 1897
The Accused Princess, 1900
Secret History of To-Day, Being Revelations of a Diplomatic Spy, 1904
The Queen against Owen. Date of first publication unknown but before 1923
Athelstane Ford. Date of first publication unknown but before 1923
The Ordeal of Fire. Date of first publication unknown but before 1923
The Discovery of the Dead, 1910

The Yellow Hand. Serialised: Dublin Evening Telegraph, 1921
The House of Sin. Serialised: Dublin Evening Telegraph, 1923
The Club of Masks, 1926

Stage Plays

A Flan in the Pan, 1896

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Aberdeen Journal.

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